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The MENNONITE STORY

LEADER'S GUIDE

by Rudy Baergen

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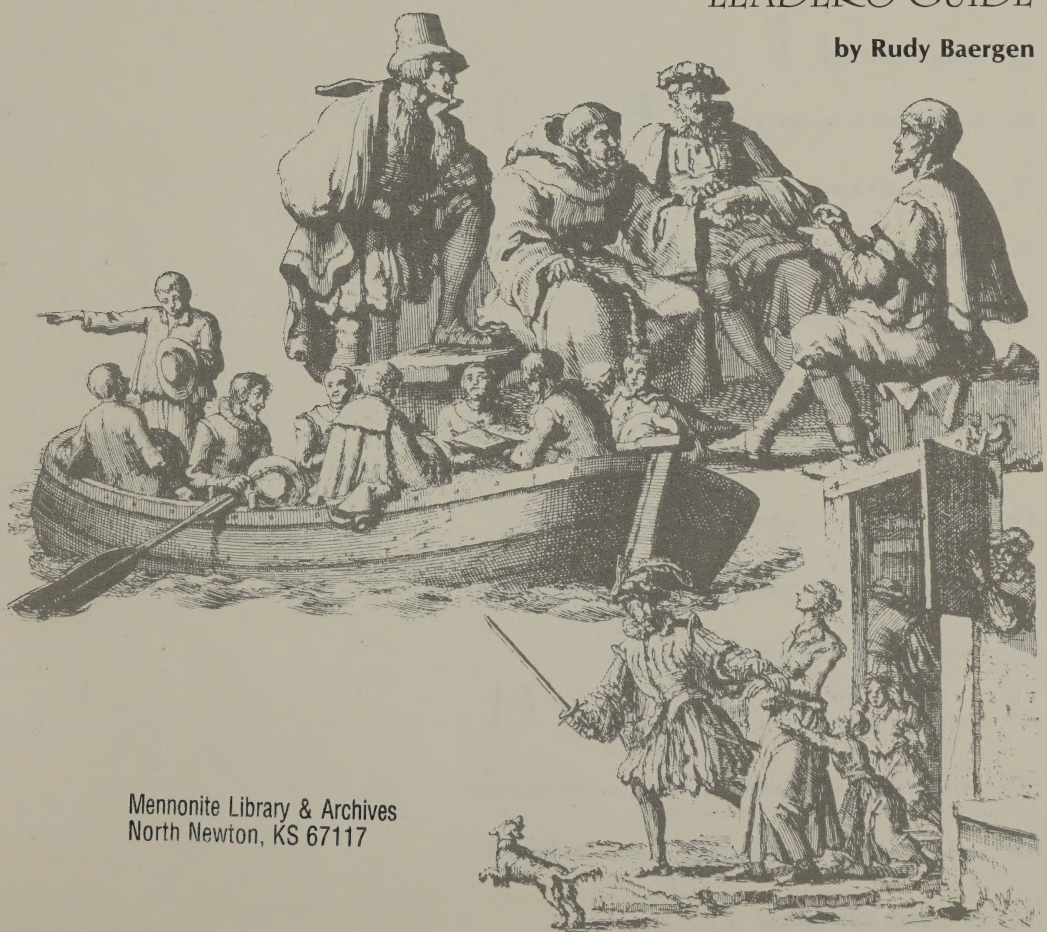

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Introduction

Preparing a Mennonite history course of thirteen sessions offers several exciting challenges. First, there is a tremendously rich heritage from which to choose material. Once the selection has been made, the second challenge is to find interesting and helpful ways of presenting history to young people. The fact that the audience for this study is very diverse with a variety of special interests, adds yet another challenge.

The material is now prepared and the challenge must be taken up by you, the teacher. The task may appear awesome but history demonstrates again and again that the small seed that is sown can bear much fruit. Although the time is limited and the learning conditions may not always be ideal, the subject matter is of utmost importance. These thirteen sessions offer an opportunity to begin and continue a process that will bring both immediate and long-range rewards. Many people have come to a better understanding of themselves and the call of God in their lives by being introduced to their spiritual ancestors. As a teacher, you can be part of the new life and excitement that comes when individuals discover their own unique heritage. Becoming aware of the Mennonite Anabaptist faith can be an exhilarating experience.

This course basically uses an inquiry approach. I have not attempted to give students an exhaustive, or even a condensed, historical survey. There are textbooks which do that. Teachers should make extensive use of at least C. Henry Smith's *Story of the Mennonites* or C. J. Dyck's *An Introduction to Mennonite History.* Student lessons attempt to present an image or give an impression and to inspire further questions and discussion. The impressions on their own, however, may at times be disjointed. The intent of the teacher's manual is to assist the teacher in providing the continuity so essential in a history course. The teacher will at times need to provide factual background and will often need to connect one account with another. Careful teacher guidance, consequently, will be of utmost importance.

The course is meant to be adaptable in terms of both length and level of difficulty. Teachers should feel free to emphasize what they wish to, as well as delete and add as they see fit. Many of the lessons can very easily be expanded into several sessions. The step-by-step suggestions are only that—suggestions. Many of the suggested methods I have found to be successful in teaching high school youth. Teachers should seek to make use of as many of the alternative methods suggested as possible to provide variety as well as to seek other creative ways to present the material. A list of films and filmstrips that are applicable to each lesson follows on page 10.

The amount of preparation and study demanded of the students is optional. Naturally, the greater the expectations on the students in terms of doing reading in advance and project work, the more helpful the experience will be for the students. One project from each student during the course would add an exciting dimension. A list of suggested projects follows on page 9.

Some of the more specific objectives for a Mennonite history course are listed below. Above and beyond these are the more general goals of Christian education and evangelism. One of the most effective means of evangelism that Christian educators have at their disposal is acquainting students with the way others before them have dealt with the difficult questions of life. All of us, and perhaps especially teenagers, can be deeply affected by the faith of our forebears. The commitment to Christ which they demonstrated in spite of persecution and opposition from society can be a source of inspiration and invitation to us and to our youth. May we be open to that invitation as many of the men and women in the Anabaptist/Mennonite tradition have been.

Rudy Baergen

Course Outline

Course Objectives

As a result of taking this course it is hoped that students will better understand what it means to be a Mennonite Christian. They will:

1. become aware of some of the unique theological emphases of the Anabaptist/Mennonite church
2. become acquainted with some of the influential people and interesting events in the Mennonite heritage
3. be challenged by the unique contribution that the Mennonite church is called to make in the present world

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Course Outline

I. Your Mennonite church
   A. Mennonite history: historical and yet living
   B. The present Christian church
      1. Apparent differences between the Mennonite church and non-Mennonite churches
      2. The different branches of the Christian church

II. The Christian Church to the Reformation
   A. The early Christian church
   B. From persecution to favor
   C. Martin Luther

III. The Reformation
   A. The Lutheran reform
   B. Ulrich Zwingli
   C. The method of reform used by Zwingli
   D. The growing dissatisfaction among Zwingli's followers

IV. The beginnings of Anabaptism
   A. The birth of Anabaptism
   B. The early Anabaptist leaders
   C. A new vision of the church

V. A persecuted community
   A. Martyrdom of the Anabaptist leaders
   B. Michael Sattler and the Schleitheim Confession
   C. *The Martyrs' Mirror*

VI. Anabaptists in the Netherlands: Menno Simons
   A. Melchior Hofmann and the revolutionary Anabaptists
   B. The early years of Menno Simons
   C. Menno's conversion to Anabaptism
   D. Menno as the Anabaptist leader

VII. The Mennonite search for a home
   A. Continued persecution in Europe
      1. Switzerland and the Palatinate
      2. The Netherlands
      3. West and East Prussia
   B. Emigrations to America
   C. Emigrations to Russia

VIII. The Mennonite experience in Russia
   A. Pre-revolution Russia
      1. Economic development
      2. Russianization reforms
      3. Emigration to North America
   B. The Russian revolution and its aftermath

IX. Further migrations to North America
   A. Emigration to America in the 20th century
      1. From Russia in the 1920s
      2. From Russia in the 1940s and 50s
   B. Mennonites in North American context

X. The Mennonites of North America
   A. The formation of the General Conference Mennonite Church
   B. The Mennonite Brethren reform in Russia
   C. The Mennonite Church

XI. Amish, Hutterites, Old Colonists: the separate way
   A. The Hutterites
   B. The Amish
   C. The Old Colonists
   D. The life of separation from the world

XII. Pacifism in Mennonite history
   A. The Anabaptist vision of following Jesus
   B. Pacifism in Mennonite history
      1. Early Anabaptism
      2. *Selbstschutz* in Russia
      3. Conscientious objection in North America
   C. Militarism in contemporary society
      1. The problem of war tax
      2. The military weapons industry

XIII. The many faces of the Mennonite church
   A. The Mennonite church today
      1. Influx of new Mennonites
      2. Black Mennonite church
      3. Mennonites around the world
      4. North American Native Mennonites
   B. The renewal of the Anabaptist vision

Suggested Projects

Lesson 1

Do a short history of your local Mennonite church/community. Take note of the origins, leadership, and important events.

Lesson 2

Read the drama by John Osborne, *Luther* (New York: New American Library).

Lesson 5

Read and report on *Pilgrim Aflame* by Myron Augsburger.

Lesson 6

Read and report on *The Broken Chalice* by Myron Augsburger.

Lesson 7

Read and report on *Christopher Dock: Colonial Schoolmaster* by Gerald Studer.

Lesson 8

Read and report on a book about the Mennonite experience in Russia (e.g., *The Russian Dance of Death,* edited by Al Reimer, or *River of Glass* by Wilfred Martens).

Present an oral interview done with someone who experienced the Russian revolution.

Lesson 9

Read and report on *The Wanderers,* a novel by Ingrid Rimland.

Do a study of a Mennonite private school and present a report.

Lesson 10

Read and report on the essays on H. S. Bender and John Oberholtzer in *Twelve Becoming* by C. J. Dyck.

Lesson 11

Research and report on one of the following Mennonite leaders: John Funk, John S. Coffman, Daniel Kauffman, Harold S. Bender.

Read and report on the essay, "Anna Warkentin Willms," from *Full Circle,* edited by Mary Lou Cummings.

Read and report on *Trailblazer for the Brethren* by Elizabeth Suderman Klassen.

Lesson 12

Report on an oral interview with a conscientious objector.

Read and report on Rudy Wiebe's *Peace Shall Destroy Many,* Ken Reed's *Mennonite Soldier,* or Joel Kauffman's *The Weight.*

Lesson 13

Report on present-day Mennonite missions.

Report on Cheyenne peace chiefs Black Kettle, Lean Bear, or White Antelope.

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Films and Filmstrips

Lesson 1

Menno's Reins, 16mm

Lesson 4

The Life of Conrad Grebel
The Life of Georg Blaurock
The Life of Felix Manz
(Heritage Series Slide Set)

Lesson 5

Faith of Our Fathers (slide set)
Secret Meeting Places (Heritage Series Slide Set)

Lesson 6

Faith of our Fathers (slide set)
The Life of Menno Simons (Heritage Series Slide Set)
Menno's Reins, 16 mm

Lesson 7

The Coming of the Mennonites to North America, 16 mm
The Quiet in the Land, 16 mm

Lesson 9

And When Their Time Had Come, 16 mm
Mennonite Migrations to Ontario (filmstrip)
Mennonite Migrations to Western Canada (filmstrip)
Mennonite Way of Life (filmstrip)
Mennonite Contributions to Canadian Society (filmstrip)
Prairie Pioneers, 16 mm

Lesson 10

Hazel's People, 16mm

Lesson 11

Hutterite Life, 16 mm
Beyond This Land, 16 mm
The Amish: A People of Preservation, 16 mm
The Mennonite Story, 16mm

Lesson 12

New Call to Peacemaking (slide set)
A Man of Peace, 16 mm
Conscience and War Taxes (slide set)

Lesson 13

A City Without Walls (filmstrip)
Hazel's People, 16 mm
Mennonites: The Peaceful Revolution, 16 mm
Ninth Mennonite World Conference, 16mm
Wichita '78, 16 mm
Tenth Mennonite World Conference (filmstrip)

Your Mennonite Church

A. Content outline

1. Mennonite history: historical and yet living
2. The present Christian church—apparent differences between the Mennonite church and non-Mennonite churches
3. The different branches of the Christian church

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson is to stimulate some thought and questions in the minds of the students about the history and thought of the Mennonite church and the Christian church in general.

C. Specific objectives

1. to introduce the students to the study of Mennonite history by helping them to see that story as historical and yet living
2. to stimulate questions about Mennonite history and about how the Mennonite church is unique
3. to have a concept of how various denominations are related to each other

D. Preparing the lesson

Introduction

My experience in teaching Mennonite history to young people has been that the material becomes exciting when students can see themselves as a part of it. Mennonite history is something relevant and meaningful when it begins to relate to present-day questions and situations. The first part of this lesson, through discussion and questions, should seek to give the student some points of connection between life in the church today and the development of the church in history.

The study of Mennonite history is more than a study of events and people of long ago made important by a generation looking for its roots. It is also the study of a living faith, a study of how God is continuing to make himself known in human activity. One of the startling discoveries of the biblical writers was that God has chosen history as the medium through which to reveal himself. So also with Mennonite history; we are dealing with something that is historical and yet living. The faith of the early Anabaptist martyrs is the same faith as that of the twentieth century conscientious objector. The experiences that our forebears had as they sought to discern the will of God in their lives continue to be a living source of inspiration for us. The story of the Anabaptist faith is continuing. Even though it is historical, it is still living.

One of the best ways of raising questions about one's own tradition and religious faith is to experience an alternative. When one is raised in a particular tradition or has never really experienced an alternative way, it is difficult to see that which is unique. Naturally, one tends to take his own religious tradition for granted. The assumption being made in the next part of this lesson is that a good way of inspiring interest and questions in Mennonite history is to consider how some of the other Christian groups are different. The more specific suggestions on teaching this lesson include a field trip to a Roman Catholic worship service. If that is not possible, perhaps a discussion on the different beliefs and customs in other churches might be the next best thing.

There are many differences between the Mennonite and other Christian groups that could be noted. Some of these differences are largely external, but most can be traced to a different understanding of the church or of Scripture. Some of the differences that could be noted are:

1. Worship services in groups like the Catholic and the Lutheran use a regular liturgy prescribed for the church liturgical year. The liturgy includes prayers of various types, singing, readings, responses from the congregation, changes in physical posture, and a short sermon.
2. The Catholic church, especially, uses many more physical helps for worship—icons, images of the saints, the rosary, and a prayer necklace. Cathedrals are adorned with paintings and candles to symbolize holy truths and help the worshiper to praise God. The use of holy water and the various practices of blessing oneself are also part of this symbolism. Whereas the Mennonite church has done away with most symbolism, the Catholic church thrives on it. The centuries of Roman Catholic history in the variety of the world's cultures has given it an awesome collection of worship aids.
3. There are some differences which go to the core of how each group understands the church. One of these is the type of baptism performed. The majority of the Christian churches practice infant baptism. Among these are the Catholic, Lutheran, Anglican, Episcopalian, United Church, Presbyterian, Methodist, and Reformed. Understandings of the rite of baptism vary somewhat. Certain Catholics see baptism as the washing away of original sin. Others view it much like Mennonites view child dedication. Nevertheless those who practice infant baptism will have a different understanding of the church than the Anabaptists whose view was based on the church being made up of voluntary, believing adults.

Another difference that goes to the heart of the understanding of the church is the view on relationship to the state. Many non-Mennonite churches display a flag at the front of the sanctuary. None of the mainline churches mentioned above are historic peace churches. Neither are many of the other groups with whom the Mennonites share the practice of adult baptism, such as the Baptist, Alliance, and other evangelical churches.

Supplies:

Student magazine for each person in the class
Reformation Family Tree (see Appendix A) Draw this on a large chart and use it for the duration of the course.

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Ask your students about their ancestors. When did they come to North America? Why did they come? What do they know about their ancestral first generation North Americans? Were they Mennonites when they came or when did they become Mennonites? What do they know about the lives of their grandparents? Where were they born, what interesting experiences have they had?
2. Read "Thinking about our history" in the student magazine, page 5.
   a. Explore together with your students the idea that Mennonite history is part of us, that it is not only historical but living.
   b. Suggest as a project for this course that each student spend an hour or two in discussion with his or her grandparents or some elderly person, talking about their life and experiences as it pertains to the Mennonite church. The oral interview method using a tape recorder can be a good method if properly done. The student should give the person questions in advance and may need some guidance in the kind of questions to ask. Perhaps an overall theme like "What does it mean to you to be a Mennonite?" could be used.
   c. Briefly review the history of your church. If possible invite a person involved in the early history of the church to speak to your class. Otherwise take note of things like when the church was established, when the building was built, who some of the founders and early leaders were, what some of the major events in the life of the church have been, what kinds of problems the church has had, whether the membership has changed in nature. (Or see Alternate Activity below.)
3. Read the description of a Mass in "Start from where you are," page 5 in the student magazine.
   a. Ask the students to share experiences that they have had with other denominational groups, in worship services or otherwise. Try to deal with mainline Christian groups.
   b. Share from your own experiences and from the material on this page of the teacher's guide on the differences between the Mennonite church and other groups.
   c. Take note of the questions that are raised about the Mennonite church in this discussion. You will have chances to speak to them later.
4. Study the Reformation Family Tree. Begin by having students list the Christian groups that they know of. Then present the chart and try to locate the various groups on it.
5. Review "The present Mennonite church," student magazine, page 7. Are there any statistics that your students find interesting and would like to discuss? How would your students characterize the average Mennonite?
6. In some way have the students evaluate the present Mennonite church. Be sure to have them think of positive attributes as well as negative ones. Perhaps you could have the students, in groups of two, list five things that they like about the Mennonite church and

five things that they would like to see different. Have the students share these and take note of them on a blackboard. The responses should only be listed at this time and not evaluated.

Alternate and Additional Activities

1. Perhaps the best thing that you could do in preparation for this course would be to take your class to a Roman Catholic Mass. A short time with the priest before or after the service would be excellent if you can arrange it. As a class spend some time discussing the experience together over lunch.
2. Invite a Roman Catholic priest to meet with you to discuss some of the characteristics of Catholic churches.
3. Invite one or two elderly people to class and have them describe what they believe it means to be a Mennonite.
4. Compile a short history of your church. If there is a history written, assign it for reading.
5. Assign as a project a study of the origins and program of MCC, MDS, and MVS.
6. Go through the constitution of your church with your class.
7. Arrange to take a field trip to some of the Mennonite churches in your area. Meet together with another youth group and have a panel discussion on the question of what it means to be Mennonite.
8. View the film *Menno's Reins.* Produced for the centennial celebrations of the Mennonites of Manitoba, the film begins with the Anabaptists and Menno Simons and relates those early events to the present day Mennonites of Manitoba.
9. Invite your pastor or council chairperson to discuss the objectives or purpose of your church.

The Christian Church to the Reformation

A. Content outline

1. The early Christian church
2. From persecution to favor
3. Martin Luther

B. Overall purpose

The purpose of this lesson is to set the stage for the study of the Anabaptist movement by focusing on some of the significant events in pre-Anabaptist history. The outlined content obviously cannot receive any detailed treatment and the concern should rather be to provide a frame of reference for the study of the Anabaptist movement.

C. Specific objectives

1. to review the origin and early development of the Christian church
2. to become aware of the changes brought to the Church by Emperor Constantine in A.D. 312
3. to gain a general awareness of the causes of the sixteenth century Reformation
4. to be introduced to one of the most noteworthy reformers, Martin Luther

D. Preparing the lesson

Introduction

Last session we began our study of Mennonite history by comparing the present Mennonite church with some other Christian churches. We took note of some of the unique aspects of the Mennonite church. We were also reminded that Mennonite history is something which is continuing and that we are a part of it.

The scope of this lesson is very large. It moves from the beginning of the Christian church to the Reformation of the sixteenth century. Our study will deal only with the origin of the church, the early persecution, the changes brought about by Emperor Constantine in A.D. 312, and the struggle of Martin Luther in the sixteenth century.

As Protestants we sometimes do an injustice to pre-Reformation history by forgetting that the men and women of the Reformation were not stepping out of history and severing themselves from their past, even though they sought to bring reform. The teachings of the Reformers can best be understood in the context of the Catholic church of the day. The reformers contended with, and to a large extent, were captivated by, a church history that went back 1500 years. God was active in the church in many of the years between the time of the early church and the Reformation. There were people of pure vision and utter sincerity, like St. Francis of Assisi, Bridget of Sweden, or the Brethren of the Common Life. Let us be cautious, then, about ignoring pre-Reformation church history. There are many insights into God's ways in the world to be gained from it.

This course, however, is a Mennonite history and consequently the content reflects that perspective. Even so, to understand the Anabaptist origins, one must note several important developments in the pre-Anabaptist church. That is the focus of this lesson.

Historical Summary

The Christian church, as the name suggests, finds its roots in the person of Jesus Christ (meaning Messiah), but Jesus himself did not begin the church. He did, however, gather around himself a group of followers who later formed the nucleus of the church. At the heart of the message of Jesus was the proclamation that the kingdom of God was at hand (Mk. 1:15). With this theme Jesus connected himself with

the work of God in the Old Testament. The prophets of the Old Testament had spoken longingly of the Messiah who would usher in the new kingdom. At the exaltation, Jesus was proclaimed to be the Messiah (Acts 2:36) and there was a call to repent and be baptized in the name of Jesus Christ. The one who had proclaimed the new kingdom now became the one who was proclaimed as the way into the kingdom. The message of the early church was that through the man Jesus, God had done wondrous things and provided a way of salvation (see the sermons in Acts).

With the coming of the Holy Spirit, the believers became the agents of furthering the work and ministry that God had done in Jesus. Those who repented and were baptized in the name of Jesus the Christ grew in numbers at a rapid pace. The term "church," coming from the Greek *ekklesia,* is first used to describe the believers in Acts 5:11. The Greek translation of the Old Testament, the Septuagint, occasionally translated the phrase, "the congregation of the Israelites," especially when gathered for a religious purpose, as *ekklesia.* The root form of the word means to call forth or to summon.

Although Luke's account of the spread of the church indicates the church spread westward, there was also some movement towards the east. Tradition says that the apostle Thomas preached the gospel in southern India. Many of these points of expansion eastward took place in areas which were to be later controlled by Muslims. The western expansion, of course, was of more consequence to Christianity. The fact that the transition from the Jewish setting of the Christian gospel to the Gentile setting was all but complete within fifty years of the time of Jesus no doubt had some long-term effects on the Christian church and its message. The exact extent of this Gentile effect has been a matter of intensive debate among New Testament scholars. At the very least, it must be acknowledged that the movement of the gospel into the Greek culture opened up a whole new way of understanding and speaking about the gospel message. Whereas the first Christians had gained their concepts and world view from the Old Testament, the Gentile Christians had in their heritage the great philosophers. This heritage affected the way in which they spoke about the nature of Jesus. It also determined the highly philosophical language and content of the creeds of the early church.

The young church experienced persecution very early in its life. Although the Book of Acts speaks only of conflict between the Jews and Christians, the major persecution of the Christians was to come from the Romans. The Romans persecuted the Christians for a number of reasons.

1. They accused the Christians of treason because they refused to worship the emperor.
2. They accused the Christians of being irreligious and atheistic since they did not worship the gods of the Romans.
3. Suspicion against the Christians was increased by the Christians' avoidance of public events and their refusal to take up military arms.
4. They were accused of participating in brutal, sensuous forms of worship, probably misunderstandings of the private communion services and the kiss of the Christian brotherhood.

The intensity of persecution that Christians faced ranged from mere hatred to imprisonment, forced labor, or death by sword, fire, or wild beasts in the renowned Roman Colosseum. The persecution as a whole can be divided into two periods. The first period began with Nero in A.D. 64 but remained very much a localized persecution, dependent on individual rulers. The second period began in A.D. 250 when Emperor Decius, concerned with the growth of the church and the sharp decline in the economic and moral life of the church, began an empire-wide attempt to crush Christianity. Thousands of Chrisitans died and thousands were maimed for life by torture. However, although there was some apostasy, at the end of the persecution the church was stronger than ever. The blood of the martyrs had truly been the seed of the church.

When Emperor Constantine became a Christian in A.D. 312 after he had seen the sign of a cross in the sky with the words "In this sign conquer," the church entered a new era. In 312 Constantine published the Edict of Milan which brought freedom of worship to the Christian church. Then in A.D. 380 the freedom was changed to special favor so that it became an offense *not* to be a Christian. Obviously this switch from persecution to favor brought many changes to the fortunes of the church. These included:

1. the building of new and costly buildings
2. recognition of Christian holy days and legal sanction of Sunday as a day of rest
3. Christianity became fashionable and many pagans, barely familiar with Christianity, became part of the church
4. the clergy became privileged
5. Christian values began to take hold in society
6. infant baptism gradually became the mode of baptism
7. church and state became united
8. Christians began to accept involvement in war activity

From this time until the Reformation, the model was one of cooperation between church and state. The church became identified with society; this was symbolized in the practice of infant baptism.

The Constantine synthesis of church and state held sway over the European world throughout the Middle Ages. Even at the time of the Reformation, though many aspects of the church were attacked by the reformers, few questioned the validity of this assumption.

The Reformation was the result of a number of complex causes. Among them was the growth of nationalism in various states, such as

England and the German territories. People in Bohemia, for example, resented having their tax money go for bridge-building in Rome. Another cause of the Reformation was the rebirth of interest in ancient Greek and Roman philosophy and literature which brought new possibilities and perspectives to the medieval Christians. And finally, corruption and opportunism in the clergy and papacy had reached a peak prior to the Reformation.

Martin Luther was the catalyst needed to begin the Reformation process. Hoping only to begin a local debate on the practice of indulgences, he soon found himself at the center of a revolt against the domination of the Roman Pope. Luther once compared his experience to that of a man who was attempting during the night to climb to the top of the village bell tower unnoticed. Losing his balance, he reached out to steady himself and found he had grabbed the bell rope. The clanging bell woke the entire town.

Resources for further study

Boer, Harry R. *A Short History of the Early Church.* Grand Rapids, Michigan: William B. Eerdmans Publishing Company, 1976.

Bainton, Roland. *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1952.

_____. *Here I Stand: A Biography of Martin Luther.* Toronto: Mentor Books, 1950.

Marty, Martin E. *A Short History of Christianity.* Cleveland: World Publishing Co., 1966.

Walker, Williston. *A History of the Christian Church.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970.

Supplies

Student magazine for each student
A time line on which to note the important events of the early church. This time line should be large enough to be used throughout the course. (Major events are outlined above.)

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Review "The early Christian church," page 9 in the student magazine.
   a. Discuss the questions on page 9 of the student magazine.
   b. Using the map show the expansion of the church that occurred with Paul's missionary journeys.
   c. Take up the questions on persecution on page 11 in the student magazine.
2. Review "From persecution to favor" in the student magazine, page 11.
   a. Take up the question after the reading on page 11. Fill in with further information from the Historical Summary above, pages 14, 15.
   b. Emphasize the new relationship that church and state now experience. They worked hand-in-glove, perhaps best symbolized by the term Holy Roman Empire. Anything that was an issue for the church was an issue for the state and vice versa.
3. Prepare a time line and place onto it the events considered up to this point, as well as some of the background events.
4. Review the reading on Martin Luther by considering the review questions in the student magazine, page 12.
   a. Note the three periods of medieval church history and also some of the causes of the reformation.
   b. A question which older students might work with is whether or not the atonement theory found meaningful by Luther is the same one accepted by the Anabaptists.

Alternate or Additional Activities

1. Visit a Lutheran Church and arrange for a meeting with the pastor, or invite a knowledgeable Lutheran person to come to your class. Ask for an explanation of some things about the church—the liturgy, baptism, Lord's Supper, and attitude on pacifism. Talk about the Lutheran Reformation, the present attitude toward Martin Luther in the church, and feelings toward other Christian denominations.
2. Read through the drama *Luther* by John Osborne.
3. View a feature-length film of the period of the early church, like *Ben Hur* or *The Robe.*

The Reformation

A. Content outline

1. The Lutheran reform
2. Ulrich Zwingli
3. The method of reform used by Zwingli
4. The growing dissatisfaction among Zwingli's followers

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson should be to introduce the students to the Reformation, out of which grew the Anabaptist movement. Of special significance is the conflict that develops between Zwingli and his followers in Zürich over the understanding of the nature of the reforms to be brought about.

C. Specific objectives

1. Students should be introduced to the Lutheran reformation
2. Students should become familiar with the leading reformer of Zürich, Ulrich Zwingli
3. Students should become knowledgeable of some of the specific reforms introduced by Zwingli
4. Students should gain an understanding of the method of reform employed by Zwingli and the objections that certain of his followers raised to the method

D. Preparing the lesson

Introduction

Martin Luther and Ulrich Zwingli were two of the great reformers of the sixteenth century. Both had considerable influence on the Anabaptist movement. Luther began his protest against some of the practices of the Roman Catholic churches in 1516. By the time of his final trial in 1521 he had moved a great distance from the doctrine and practice of the Roman church.

Meanwhile one of the most gripping dramas in Anabaptist/Mennonite history was soon to take place in the city of Zürich, Switzerland. The main characters which made up this drama were Ulrich Zwingli, the patient persuading statesman-reformer on the one side, and the youthful, idealistic, impatient, more daring students he had gathered around him on the other side. The drama contains many age-old themes. The wise and inspirational Zwingli brings new life to the church of Zürich and draws a number of restless idealistic young men to his side in the cause of reform. Zwingli helps these young people to commit themselves to Christ and to the reform of the church. Zwingli is the teacher and quite likely the disciples are often Zwingli's inspiration. While Zwingli gradually develops a new vision of what the church should be, his followers are eager to put the suggestions into practice. The relationship between Zwingli and his followers is one of mutual respect and intimacy.

As time goes on, the teacher and his students no longer always see things in the same way. They find themselves agreeing on much of the theory but the method of applying the theory becomes a point of contention. The cautious, slow-moving Ulrich Zwingli, once the intimate friend and advisor, comes to be seen by his radical followers as an obstacle to true reform. Suddenly Ulrich Zwingli and his admirers and fellow workers in the cause of reformation find themselves on opposing sides of what becomes a life and death debate.

Historical Summary

Although Luther began the Reformation by objecting to the practice of indulgences, he soon moved on to other things. The following, in brief form, are some of the developments of

his thought:

1. Luther denied papal and council infallibility and repudiated the authority of the canon law. He began to refer to the papacy as the Antichrist.
2. Gradually Luther became more and more convinced that the ultimate authority, the final word on any controversy, was the Word of God. The Word of God meant more than Scripture for Luther. It also referred to the self-disclosure of God through Jesus, the supreme manifestation of God.
3. Luther reduced the number of sacraments to two: the Lord's Supper and Baptism. For something to be a sacrament, he said, it had to be an outward sign of the grace of Christ. Consequently, he disqualified ordination, marriage, extreme unction, confirmation, and penance as sacraments. Luther also brought a slightly new understanding to the Lord's Supper. He denied the Catholic doctrine of transubstantiation which held that the substance of the elements was transformed into the body and blood of Christ during the service. Luther argued that God is always present in the elements in a special way. God has made himself known in a special way at three points, he believed: in the flesh of Christ, in the word embodied in Scripture, and in the communion elements. At the Lord's Supper, the minister lifts the veil which prevents people from sensing God's presence. Although the element of mystery remained in the Lord's Supper for Luther, he argued that the sacrament is not magical; it is not effective in itself. It is not a sacrifice as Roman Catholic theology held. It requires faith on the part of the participant for it to be valid. The mass is not the performance of a rite but the experience of a presence. That experience does not depend on the priest as much as on the one who receives the bread and the wine.
4. In spite of his argument that the sacrament is not effective without faith, Luther retained infant baptism. Faith, he said, is God's gift. Why should he not give it to the child as soon as to the adult? He came to speak of "faith awake" and "faith asleep." "Is the child not in some sense like the sleeping Christian adult?" he asked. The child is given the seed of faith in baptism and is sustained by the faith of its parents. In this way, children are part of the Christian community from the outset and there is recognition that the faith given to the child must grow.

   Luther also spoke of the visible and the invisible church. One can be initiated into the visible church, but God only knows who belongs to the invisible church. Although Luther at one time considered organizing a voluntary church, he never did take that step.
5. Luther rejected all three primary branches of the church of the Middle Ages: the papacy, the clergy, and the monasteries. Luther argued that all Christians are priests. He came to believe that there is only one ethical standard which applies to all Christians.
6. Luther stressed that salvation comes to humans through the grace of God on the basis of faith *alone*. Moral effort is of no value in the economy of salvation. The highest ethic as spelled out by Jesus in the Sermon on the Mount defies achievement and is more to indicate to us our unworthiness than a call to action. The neighbor and the brother are not involved in the salvation process. Love is the fruit of faith but it is not necessary for salvation, or it would become works.
7. Luther separated the church and the state, at least in theory. The government was to be secular. It is the agency ordained by God to punish the bad and protect the good. It is the right of the state to go to war. Christians must fulfill their obligations to the state just as well as to the church.

Luther was a man for his time, and the response to him was overwhelming. Because of local support, he was never put to death as the sentence of the Diet of Worms had demanded. Luther was to have a great influence on all Reformation groups, including the Anabaptists, but they were also to take major exception to some of his convictions and thus heap upon themselves the wrath of Luther.

Biographical information about Ulrich Zwingli is already given in the student magazine, but some further general comments may be beneficial. Zwingli's career as a Roman Catholic priest began in 1506 in the town of Glarus. In 1516 he moved to the monastery of Einsiedeln, one of the oldest and most revered shrines in Europe. In 1519 he took up the responsibility of the priesthood of the great Grossmünster Church in Zürich.

Switzerland was at this time divided into a number of cantons, small rural areas dominated by cities like Zürich. The canton of Zürich had a population of about sixty thousand and the city of Zürich claimed about five thousand citizens. Zürich was ruled by two councils. The Great Council, made up of two hundred leaders of gilds and patricians, was the real ruling body of the city. The Little Council, composed of members from the Great Council and from the remaining population, administered the daily affairs of the city. The various cantons of Switzerland were loosely linked in a confederation in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries.

At his appointment to Zürich, Zwingli began at once a very systematic exposition of books of the Bible. In 1519 he discovered the writings of Martin Luther; the same year he almost lost his life to the plague. In 1520 his spiritual life was deepened by the death of a brother. He now also resigned his papal pension. From the pulpit he denounced the practice of mercenary soldiering, until Zürich forbade the practice in 1521.

In 1522 Zwingli's reform program began in earnest. In November he resigned as the Roman Catholic priest and thereupon was immediately reinstated as an evangelical minister by the Great Council. Beginning in January 1523

several public debates were held and it was agreed to no longer accept saintly intercession, monastic vows, and the existence of purgatory. In subsequent debates images, relics, and organs were done away with. The Mass was abolished and services were changed from Latin into German. Monasteries had their property confiscated and priests and nuns were given permission to marry. Zwingli himself was married in 1524 to a woman whom he had for several years treated as his wife.

It was the method used to reform the church that brought Zwingli into conflict with some of his followers. From the outset Zwingli worked hand-in-glove with the Great Council in the reforms in Zürich. It was the council that reappointed him as the Zürich pastor in 1522, and throughout his career Zwingli remained sensitive to its wishes. Zwingli believed that the base for reform was the Scripture but the ultimate administering authority was the civil government. Scripture was to be interpreted by the pastor, in this case Zwingli, and he would recommend reforms to the Christian community. The civil government was viewed as the administering arm of the community and it became, therefore, the final authority in the administration of reform. The method of declaring a public debate before the Great Council and the effort to win its favor became the standard means of procedure.

This method of reform worked well until the council, for political or economic reasons, was not prepared to move on the recommendations made by Zwingli, even though it might agree with them in theory. At that point Zwingli either had to challenge the final authority of the council or back down in order to preserve the working relationship. In the debate of October 1523 Zwingli's more radical followers took the first route; Zwingli chose to follow the second. The ultimate source of authority in the life of Christians and the church became the point of conflict. Was it Scripture, no matter what else, or was it Scripture and the civil authorities, which in the end determined the reforms and direction of the Christian community? Were there times for the sake of unity that a middle road had to be taken and Scripture temporarily compromised? These questions continue to face us today.

Zwingli, in his method of reform, had in mind a theocracy, a society where the church and the state worked hand-in-hand to establish the kingdom of God on earth. This he believed would happen with perseverance and patience. Zürich, however, was soon in conflict with the neighboring cantons that had remained Roman Catholic. Zürich was attacked in 1531 and Zwingli himself led a poorly trained and poorly equipped army against the Catholic cantons. Zwingli, together with twenty-six members of the council and twenty-five pastors, lost his life in the battle that ensued. This brought an end to the expansion of the Swiss reformation and each canton was given full right to regulate its own internal religious affairs.

One final question needs brief consideration. What was the relation between Zwingli and Luther? Zwingli was always reluctant to acknowledge dependence on Luther. Dependent or not, Zwingli held many beliefs in common with Luther. There were, however, also differences and the one which led the two reformers to clash bitterly was the interpretation of communion. Unlike Luther, Zwingli denied any physical presence of Christ in the bread and the wine. Luther moved from the Catholic position of transubstantiation—that the bread and wine, through the action of the priest, became the body and blood of Christ—to consubstantiation, that Christ was always present in the elements and the minister only lifted the veil. To Luther the Lord's Supper, an actual partaking of Christ, continued to be a sacrament and a channel of grace. Zwingli, however, went further and eliminated all mystery from the communion, seeing it as a sign and memorial. Its significance lay in uniting a congregation in loyalty to its Lord.

Resources for further study

Books

Bainton, Roland. *The Church of our Fathers.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1953.

_____. *Here I Stand.* New York: Mentor Books, 1950.

_____. *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century.* Boston: Beacon Press, 1952. Chapter 4.

Dyck, C. J. *An Introduction to Mennonite History,* 2nd Edition. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1981. Chapter 2.

Jackson, Samuel Macauley. *Ulrich Zwingli: Selected Works.* Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 1972.

Mennonite Encyclopedia. "Ulrich Zwingli."

Smith, C. H. *The Story of the Mennonites,* 5th Edition. Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1981. Chapter 1.

Walker, Williston. *A History of the Christian Church.* New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1970. First edition, 1918.

Supplies

Student magazine for each student
Map of Europe in 1550 (teaching packet)
Blackboard
Reformation family tree

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Begin the lesson by reviewing the Reformation family tree prepared for Lesson 1. Use this chart together with the map of Europe to set the framework for a study of the Reformation.
2. Review "The Lutheran Reform" in the student magazine, pages 13, 14.

a. Take up the question on page 14 of the student magazine.
b. Mention some of the changes Luther brought to the theology and practice of the church (see Historical Summary above).

3. Review "Zwingli's early life" and "Zwingli's reforms" in the student magazine. Take note on a blackboard of some of the points of information presented in the readings. Have students help select the points of information. A question-answer approach may be necessary to draw out some of the information.

Ulrich Zwingli's early life

Zwingli was born into a prosperous family in 1484.
He received a good education, but always valued his rural upbringing.
In 1506 Zwingli became priest in Glarus.
He served as chaplain to mercenary soldiers.
Zwingli experienced a good deal of remorse over not maintaining his priestly celibacy vows.
In 1518 Zwingli was called to the Grossmünster Church in Zürich.
Zwingli introduced preaching about the text of Scripture with no standarized readings.

Zwingli's reforms

Zwingli objected to the sale of indulgences and to the unmarried state of clergy.
The Bible was even more of a pattern for Zwingli than for Luther.
What the Bible does not command we may not do.
For Zwingli, the Lord's Supper was only a reminder of Christ's suffering.
Zwingli persuaded the council to accept a number of reforms such as stopping the mass.

Be prepared to fill in any additional historical information on Zwingli up to the October 23, 1523, debate.

4. Have students take note of the difference between Luther and Zwingli's view of the Lord's Supper. (See question 1, student magazine, page 16.)
5. Clarify the system of reform used by Zwingli, using the following diagram on the blackboard. (Question 2, student magazine, page 16.) Scripture ——→ is interpreted by pastor (Zwingli) ——→ who recommends reforms to the Council (the Christian community) ——→ which administers the reform.

Example:

Scripture does not command crosses and images to be present → therefore Zwingli believes Scripture is opposed to crosses and images → recommends to Council to abolish use of crosses and images → Council passes a law abolishing images and crosses

6. Review "The conflict between Zwingli and his followers." Take note of the conflict that develops between Zwingli and the council.
a. Diagram of the conflict on the blackboard:
Scripture disagrees with Mass ——→ Zwingli recommends abolishing Mass ——→ Council (Christian community) refuses to administer reform. Notice how the Council has become the final authority rather than Scripture.
b. Compare the method of reform preferred by Zwingli's followers. They argued that the state should not be involved in decisions of the faith. Diagram their method on the blackboard:
Scripture ——→ Christian community together interprets and implements the reform.
c. Take up the questions on page 17, student magazine. Though many Mennonite groups tend to be conservative, there is a radical tendency in our heritage. Explore this idea together with your students.

Alternative or Additional Suggestions

1. An effective teaching method for this lesson could be a historical improvisation. After familiarizing students with the figures in the drama, using the student material as background, give the students starting directions and let the improvisation unfold. (This method could be used in several lessons. For most effective use, the teacher should become acquainted with some theory on role plays, improvisation, and simulation games. See for example *Using Biblical Simulations,* Miller, Snyder and Neff.)

Present the problem at hand, perhaps the question of what to do with images (the question of the mass may be too complicated). Give a set of basic directions to *Zwingli, council members,* and *Zwingli's followers, Stumpf and Grebel.* For example, *Zwingli* should try at length to convince the council of the need to do away with images. But he remains loyal to the council and gradually retreats from his position. *The council* should be directed to basically agree with Zwingli in theory but for reasons of economics and politics (fear of the surrounding states), refuse to move forward on the recommendation. *The radicals* should be instructed to

demand reforms, in spite of the reservation of the council. They might also push Zwingli on exactly what his position is and become impatient when he begins to retreat. Allow the improvisation to unfurl until it seems the students have gained a feeling for the conflict that existed.

2. Discuss the implications of the two different methods of deciding what to do as a church. Have students give examples of the Zwinglian approach and the more radical approach of his followers (e.g., some Christians will argue that we must obey the state in order to maintain a working relationship even if we disagree with its wishes because of our religious convictions).

The Beginnings of Anabaptism

A. Content outline

1. The birth of Anabaptism
2. The early Anabaptist leaders
3. A new vision of the church

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson should be to give the students the historical information on the beginning of the Anabaptist movement and to consider the Anabaptist view of the church and baptism.

C. Specific objectives

1. to become familiar with the beginnings of Anabaptism and some of the important personalities involved in that beginning
2. to become aware of the role of baptism and the view of the church in the split with Zwinglian reform
3. to understand the difference in the view of the church between Zwingli and the Anabaptists
4. to understand adult baptism as the symbol of the new view of the church proclaimed by the Anabaptists

D. Preparing the lesson

Introduction

To fully appreciate the beginning of Anabaptism one must work with both historical information and theological concepts. Although this course is intended to be primarily a history course, it is not possible to understand some of the historical developments without considering the theological ideas behind them. Theology and history often go hand-in-hand when one considers the development of the church. It should be emphasized that the theological discussion that takes place in this lesson, as in others, should be historically based. The Anabaptist view of baptism and the church are important concepts to consider to fully appreciate the historical developments under consideration in this session.

Historical and Theological Summary

In the last session we ended with the confrontation between Zwingli and some of his followers in the December 1523 debate on the matter of the Mass. From that time to the fall of 1524 little is known about the disillusioned disciples. We do know that they met regularly at the home of Felix Manz for Bible study and that at one point they attempted a compromise with Zwingli by proposing a Reformation party to act as a political base within the council sympathetic to the reforms desired. That too was rejected by Zwingli.

In 1524 the issue of infant baptism came into public focus. Some of the radicals were preaching against infant baptism and withholding their own children from baptism. Following the debate on January 17, 1525, this became the issue at which the line was drawn between Zwingli and the Anabaptists. More will be said later about baptism and the new view of the church.

A few additional points of biographical information beyond the excerpts in the student magazine could be underscored. A common point to all of the Anabaptist leaders mentioned was the opportunity that all of them had had to gain a university education. Balthasar Hubmaier, for example, had earned a doctorate degree in theology. Grebel and Manz especially were interested in the original languages of the Scriptures. Manz was known as an accomplished Hebraist. Their education had tended to be humanistically oriented, emphasizing the goodness and capability of man, the crown of

God's creation. None of them seem to have had the personal struggle with feelings of unworthiness that Martin Luther had.

Balthasar Hubmaier and Georg Blaurock were Roman Catholic priests before they turned to Anabaptism. All had become associated with Zwingli somewhere between 1521 and early 1524.

Though little is known about Manz's spiritual pilgrimage, we do know that Grebel, Blaurock, and Hubmaier experienced a deepening relationship with Christ immediately before or during their contact with Zwingli. Grebel, especially, had lived a restless life, attending several different universities and participating in the immorality of the day. Grebel's modification in life was a gradual one after 1520 when he returned from Paris to Zürich, but his letters indicate some significant experience of transformation prior to July 1522. All these men suffered persecution and death shortly after the inception of the movement.

We have already noted the change that occurred in the church following the Christianization of the Empire under Constantine and Theodosius. Under this system the church and human society coincided numerically. In this system, sometimes referred to as the *Corpus Christianum*, the identity of the church and society became so all-pervading and unconscious that even the reformers of the sixteenth century on the whole were not even aware of a problem.[1] The Anabaptists, however, argued that their society could not be designated as Christian and identified with the church. The church for them was not ". . . simply an administrative subdivision of a monolithic society, charged with giving that society moral sanction and psychological stability, nor an invisible mystic communion of true believers, but a new kind of disciplined fellowship, taking shape within history by the gathering of confessing believers."[2] At the heart of this new concept of the church—which Anabaptists pointed out was the New Testament view of the church—was the idea of voluntary membership based on conversion and commitment to a life of discipleship to Jesus Christ. In the words of H. S. Bender, for the Anabaptists the church was "a body of committed and practicing Christians pledged to the highest standard of New Testament living."[3] Baptism for the Anabaptist was the entrance of the believer into the membership and the discipline of that Christian fellowship.

One of the implications of this view of the church was the breakdown of the image which suggested that there is a "visible" and an "invisible" church. The Constantinian synthesis had merged the institutional church with society. Yet, not all members of the church baptized as infants, it was recognized, seemed worthy. So a distinction developed between the visible and the invisible church. The true church, made up of true believers is invisible, since only God knows true faith. The Anabaptists as a whole rejected the idea of an invisible church, maintaining that the Christian community in any particular place is as visible as the individual Christian. Consequently, membership in the church was not membership in some abstract universal institution, but membership in a real local community of men and women. To be baptized meant to join a human community of believers. The practice of separating baptism from church membership would have been quite unacceptable to them. Baptism meant committing oneself to accepting the lordship of Jesus and walking under that lordship with a group of redeemed sinners like oneself.

[1]John H. Yoder, "The Prophetic Dissent," *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision.* Guy F. Hershberger, ed. (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1957), p. 97.
[2]*Ibid.*
[3]*Ibid.*, p. 48.

Resources for further study

Armour, R. S. *Anabaptist Baptism: A Representative Study.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1966.
Blanke, Fritz. *Brothers in Christ.* Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1961.
Bender, H. S. *Conrad Grebel 1498-1526: Founder of the Swiss Brethren.* Goshen, Ind.: Mennonite Historical Society, 1950.
Dyck, C. J. *An Introduction to Mennonite History.* Chapter 2.
Hershberger, Guy F. *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1957.
Klassen, William and Klaassen, Walter. *The Writings of Pilgram Marpeck.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1978, 2nd Ed.
Littel, Franklin. *The Anabaptist View of the Church.* Boston: Starr King Press, 1958.
Mennonite Encyclopedia.
Smith, C. H. *The Story of the Mennonites.* Chapter 1.
Wenger, J. C. *Conrad Grebel's Programmatic Letters of 1524.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1970.
Yoder, John H., ed. *The Legacy of Michael Sattler.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1973.

Audio-Visual

Heritage Series Slide Sets deal with Conrad Grebel, Georg Blaurock, and Felix Manz.

A set of reproductions of paintings of the Anabaptist leaders by Tom Shank is available from the Laurelville Retreat Center, Rt. 5, Box 145, Mt. Pleasant, PA 15666, for $1.50 per set.

Supplies

Student magazine for each student
Audio visuals if desired

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Introduce the lesson by a brief review of past lessons and indicate the topics for this lesson.
2. Review "Zwingli's radical followers" in the

student magazine, pages 19, 20.

a. Make use of the paintings of the Anabaptist leaders if you have purchased them or use the *Heritage Series Slide Sets* on Conrad Grebel, Georg Blaurock, and Felix Manz.
b. Take up the question on page 20 of the student magazine. Several points are indicated in the Historical Summary.

3. Review "The birth of Anabaptism," pages 20, 21. The questions at the end of the reading can serve as a means of noting some of the factual information presented.
4. Review "Adult baptism and a new concept of the church" in the student magazine, page 22, and discuss the questions following.
   a. Question 1 on page 22 draws attention to the different concept of the church that Zwingli and Grebel were working with. Whereas Zwingli wanted to maintain a mass people's church, Grebel favored a church made up of voluntary, committed people.
   b. Question 2 deals with the root of conflict between Zwingli and the Anabaptists. The comment quoted points out that even though it was the question of baptism and how it should be administrated that appears to be the issue, it was so because of the conflict on the vision of what the church is.

The symbol of the mass church is the baptism of humans as soon as they enter society.	The symbol of the voluntary church of the committed is baptism as an adult.

Baptism, consequently, became the focus of the conflict.

   c. As an alternative to question 4, see the debate suggested in Alternative activities, number 2.
5. Have a discussion about the significance of baptism. One or two of the following ideas may be used to stimulate discussion.
   a. Invite someone who has been baptized, preferably a young person, and have that person share with the group why he or she was baptized. What meaning did baptism have for that person?
   b. Invite a minister to the class to talk about his or her understanding of the act of baptism. Have the minister talk about and explain the procedure.
   c. If you have students in your class or members of the congregation who were baptized as infants have them reflect on their experience. What does baptism mean to them? What is the difference in the understanding of baptism? Are there any advantages for infant baptism? What scriptural references are used for support of the practice of infant baptism?
   d. Record an interview with a minister, priest, or knowledgeable lay person from a church which practices infant baptism. Ask questions about the meaning of baptism, attitudes toward adult baptism, relationship between baptism and salvation. Play this interview in class to initiate discussion.

F. Alternative or additional activities

1. Have the students prepare a debate on the following resolution: Be it resolved that adult baptism is the correct view of baptism.
2. Debate the resolution: One should be allowed to become baptized without becoming a church member.
3. Have a panel discussion on the meaning of baptism. Invite people from a variety of ages to sit on the panel and respond to questions about the significance of baptism.
4. Have your class meet with a minister or priest from a group which practices infant baptism to discuss the question of baptism.
5. Arrange to take your students to a service where infants are being baptized. This would be an excellent preparation for the entire lesson.
6. View and discuss the parts of the *Heritage Series Slide Sets* which deal with the early Anabaptist leaders.

5.

A Persecuted Community

A. Content outline

1. Martyrdom of the Anabaptist leaders
2. Michael Sattler and the Schleitheim Confession
3. *The Martyrs' Mirror*

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson is to have students become familiar with the story of persecution in the early Anabaptist history.

C. Specific objectives

1. to learn some stories of the persecution that the Anabaptists faced
2. to consider some of the causes and effects of the persecution
3. to observe and admire the willingness of the Anabaptist originators to stand out in opposition to their society

D. Preparing the lesson

Introduction

In a time in which most Mennonite people have become assimilated into the society around them and reluctant to stand out in opposition to it, it is beneficial for us to look again at the era of persecution in our Mennonite history. For many people it is an intriguing and yet a puzzling chapter of history. They are touched by the depth of conviction that these men and women possessed. Yet they are puzzled by the extent of the wrath that was unleashed upon them. The torture and the executions at the hand of fellow Christians are a continuous reminder of the shortcomings even of those who profess to be the body of Christ. They also reaffirm the Anabaptist conviction that the one who follows Jesus must be prepared to be hated by the world.

The historical material dealt with in this lesson brings to light three themes for consideration. The first two have to do with the effect of persecution on a community: the loss of leadership through execution and the spreading of the movement because of the scattering. The third theme is the willingness on the part of Anabaptists to accept a higher authority in life than the laws of men, whatever the cost.

Historical Summary

It has been noted in the student handbook that already before the first baptism in the home of Felix Manz, an attempt was made to suppress the views of the dissenters. When these men, citing Acts 5:29, refused to remain silent and obey the law of the council, they were arrested and imprisoned and persecution gained momentum. Prison terms, fines, and coercion to recant soon gave way to threats of capital punishment. On March 7, 1526, the council made it punishable by death to rebaptize anyone. The means of execution was to be drowning, a particularly dishonorable form of execution.

Persecution soon spread throughout Germany, Austria, and elsewhere. Wherever Anabaptists were apprehended, they were called to recant and return to the state religion or else pay the price for their convictions. Imprisonment in dungeons, severe torture, drowning, burnings at the stake, beheadings, and live burials faced those who were caught and refused to recant.

In 1529 the national legislative assembly of the German Empire declared all Anabaptists to be heretics subject to execution with no opportunity for defense. This accelerated the program of suppression and execution. In the next years four to five thousand men and women were put

to death. During this time a special group of armed executioners and mounted soldiers known as *Täuferjäger* hunted down and killed Anabaptists on the spot.

Why were these sincere, committed Christians singled out for such a massive program of imprisonment, torture, banishment, and execution in its various forms? Robert Kreider has suggested several reasons:

1. The authorities, though they had broken with Rome, still held to a *Corpus Christianum*, a system of complete civic and religious solidarity. The Anabaptists threatened the unity of the civil and religious communities and were therefore accused of dismembering the church, the body of Christ.
2. The authorities were afraid of the rapid growth of the movement, concerned that a large Anabaptist community would threaten the military establishment and time honored civic customs. They also suspected that underneath the peaceful language of the Anabaptists lay a revolutionary potential which might break out in some future time.[1]

Beyond these major reasons for persecution were many unfounded and exaggerated points of propaganda. Anabaptists were accused of a secret alliance with Roman Catholicism, charged with every conceivable kind of immorality, and accused of being dangerous seditionaries, plotters of rebellion.

The effect of the severe persecution was twofold (see student magazine, p. 24). The persecution scattered the Anabaptists and no doubt aided the rapid growth of the movement. It spread rapidly beyond the confines of the canton of Zürich. In certain provinces it seemed large portions of the population were sympathetic toward the Anabaptists. The evangelical cause of the Anabaptists was prodded on by the scattering of the leadership. Once again the ancient adage, "the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church" was fulfilled. Anabaptist congregations were soon established in many of the important cities throughout the northern Swiss cantons and in South Germany, Tryol, Austria, and Moravia.

Perhaps the more critical effect in terms of the welfare of the movement, however, was the fact that the original leadership was soon eliminated. John Horsch lists about twenty leaders from the early Anabaptists who lost their lives early in the movement's history.[2] This sudden loss of people qualified to give direction to a predominantly grassroots movement would bring hard times to the young movement in the next years.

It was partly as a response to this problem that the Schleitheim Conference was called. (See student magazine, p. 24.) The task before the new movement was to consolidate the theological emphasis in the face of the continuing loss of leaders. Besides pressures from without, there were also pressures from within in the form of a growing tendency to emphasize prophecy and end-time anticipation. The new movement had to come to grips with these two threats.

It is not known exactly how the conference was called, who all participated, and what the particular reason was for it to take place at the moment that it did. Tradition indicates that Michael Sattler was the leading spirit at the conference. The focus of the discussion was on those points in which the Anabaptists differed from the rest of Protestantism. The Schleitheim Confession, which came out of the meeting, was not an attempt to be a balanced catechism or creed but a handbook on the distinctiveness of the Anabaptist convictions. The seven articles deal basically with the church and its relation to the state. That is where the primary conflict with Luther and Zwingli lay, so that is where the emphasis of this document came to rest.

Michael Sattler, instrumental in this conference, was born in 1490 at Stauffen in the Breisgau. He had entered the monastery of St. Peter's where he became a man of great influence, in line for the position of prior. In the 1520s, however, under the influence of Luther and Zwingli, he left the monastery, became married, and by March 1525, had become a member of the Anabaptist fellowship. Michael Sattler has been seen as one of the most significant theologians of the early Anabaptist movement. Beyond the Schleitheim Confession, Sattler wrote a number of letters which indicate the depth of his thought and the reputation he held among the Reformers.

Michael Sattler's martyrdom is recorded together with the stories of 802 other martyrs in the *Martyrs' Mirror*. The origin of this classic volume goes back to 1562 when the *Het Offer des Heeren* (Sacrifice unto the Lord) appeared in Dutch. Hans de Ries enlarged the collection in 1631. Thielman J. van Braght enlarged it again in 1660 after many reprintings. In 1685 the Mennonite artist Jan Luyken added a number of etchings to complement the stories. The volume has been printed in German and English and has been a source of inspiration to Mennonites throughout their history.

[1]Robert Kreider, "The Anabaptists and the State," *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision*, edited by Hershberger, pp. 181-184.

[2]John Horsch, "The Persecution of the Evangelical Anabaptists," MQR Vol. XII, Jan. 1938, p. 9.

Resources for further study

Augsburger, Myron. *Pilgrim Aflame*. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1967.

Dyck, C. J. *An Introduction to Mennonite History*, Chapters 3-5.

Horsch, John. "The Persecution of the Evangelical Anabaptists," *MQR* Vol. XII, Jan. 1938, pp. 3-26.

Krahn, Cornelius. *The Witness of the Martyrs' Mirror For Our Day*. North Newton, Kans.: Bethel College.

Kreider, Robert. "The Anabaptists and the State," *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision*, ed. by Guy Hershberger. Scottdale: Herald Press, 1962.

Martyrs' Mirror. Scottdale: Mennonite Publishing House.

Smith, C. H. *The Story of the Mennonites.* Chapter 3.
Yoder, John H. *The Legacy of Michael Sattler.* Scottdale: Herald Press, 1973.

Audio-Visual
Faith of Our Fathers, slide series, especially part two.
Secret Meeting Places, Heritage Series Slide Sets.

Supplies

Student magazine for each student
Copy of *Martyrs' Mirror* or *The Witness of the Martyrs' Mirror for Our Day*

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Spend some time looking at pictures of the Anabaptist martyrs in the student magazine or in the *Martyrs' Mirror* if you can get a copy. If your church library does not have *Martyrs' Mirror,* obtain one or more copies of *The Witness of Martyrs' Mirror For Our Day,* edited by Cornelius Krahn. Order from Mennonite Historical Library and Archives, Bethel College, North Newton, KS 67117. ($2.00)
2. Review "Martyrdom of the Anabaptist leaders," in the student magazine, pages 23, 24.
   a. Fill in some of the background information on persecution.
   b. Discuss the question at the end of the reading. (See Historical Summary above.)
3. Go through the Schleitheim Confession together.
   a. Fill in the historical background to the Schleitheim Confession.
   b. Consider the discussion questions that follow the Confession in the student magazine, page 24.
4. Read the account of Michael Sattler's trial and death as a dramatical reading. Assign the part of narrator, Michael Sattler, and the town clerk to different readers. Take special note of the charges laid against Sattler. See Appendix B for Sattler's response to these charges.
5. Read the accounts in the student magazine selected from the *Martyrs' Mirror.*
   a. Allow the stories and pictures to make their impression.
   b. Discuss the questions in the student magazine, page 28.

F. Alternative or additional activities

1. Spend more time simply reading accounts from *Martyrs' Mirror.* Allow the readings to speak for themselves and make their impact. Deal with questions and comments as they arise.
2. View and listen to parts I and II of Jan Gleysteen's production *Faith of Our Fathers,* or view the short slide series *Secret Meeting Places.*
3. Simulate a raid by the Anabaptist-hunters on an Anabaptist worship service. To be effective this would require the proper setting and atmosphere, preferably with the elements of surprise and seriousness.
4. Do a historical improvisation on the trial of Michael Sattler. Have the charges read one by one and Sattler defend himself on the basis of the account given in *Martyrs' Mirror* (reprinted in Appendix B).
5. Study hymns 40 and 344 in *The Mennonite Hymnal,* which were written by early Anabaptists.
6. Have someone report on the book *Pilgrim Aflame* by Myron Augsburger. (This is a book about Michael Sattler.)

Anabaptists in the Netherlands: Menno Simons

A. Content outline

1. Melchior Hofmann and the revolutionary Anabaptists
2. The early years of Menno Simons
3. Menno's conversion to Anabaptism
4. Menno as the Anabaptist leader

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson is to have students become aware of the role and the significance of Menno Simons in the Anabaptist movement.

C. Specific objectives

1. to become aware of the revolutionary direction taken by certain Anabaptists in the Netherlands
2. to become familiar with the pilgrimage of Menno Simons which brought him to an Anabaptist position
3. to gain an appreciation for the significance of Menno Simons in the Anabaptist movement

D. Preparing the lesson

Introduction

In the previous session we noticed how persecution raged against the Anabaptists. This persecution had taken its toll within the leadership and the common people. Menno Simons was later to describe this situation in the following way:

> Some they have executed by hanging, some they have tortured with inhuman tyranny, and afterwards choked with cords at the stake. Some they roasted and burned alive. Some they have killed with the sword and given them to the fowls of the air to devour. Some they have cast to the fishes. . . . Others wander about here and there, in want, homelessness, and affliction, in mountains and deserts, in holes and caves of the earth. They must flee with their wives and little children from one country to another, from one city to another. They are hated, abused, slandered and lied about by all men.[1]

Consequently it was not strange that the less balanced spirits came to the fore. "Those who had lived under the continual shadow of death in caves and desolate places of the earth began like Muentzer (a revolutionary leader of the peasant revolt in Germany) to dream dreams of the birds of the heaven coming to devour the carcasses of the oppressors, of the return of the Lord to vindicate the saints, of the New Jerusalem from which the 144,000 of the redeemed should go out to slaughter the ungodly."[2]

That the entire Anabaptist movement was not subverted by the excesses of a handful of fanatics was due to the strong leadership of men like Pilgram Marbeck, Jacob Hutter, and Menno Simons. Menno was indeed a man for the hour. Menno helped to hold the Anabaptist movement true to the original principles of a community separated from the world and committed to patterns of New Testament living.

Historical Summary

Melchior Hofmann can be credited for having brought Anabaptism to the Netherlands. An uneducated tanner, but an imaginative and eloquent speaker, Hofmann followed in the tradition of Hans Hut, whom the Schleitheim Conference had counseled on the issue of too strong an emphasis on end-time prophecy. Although strongly chiliastic, Hofmann's message remained peaceful, unlike his successors'.

Jan Matthijs, the successor to Hofmann, believed that what his teacher had prophesied

would come to pass, not in Strassburg, but in the city of Münster. He had been invited to that city by sympathetic preachers and proceeded to prepare it to be the New Jerusalem. His followers were to prepare for the kingdom of God by the use of the sword. Everyone was now forced to join the movement and receive baptism or flee the city. The Bishop of Münster naturally opposed the movement and laid siege to the city. Matthijs, believing himself to be in the tradition of the Old Testament charismatic judges and divinely anointed by God, sought to break through the lines of the enemy with a small band of soldiers. He was killed and the leadership passed to Jan van Leiden.

Van Leiden's ideas were more extreme than Matthijs'. He proclaimed himself to be King David and introduced polygamy and other sinful practices. Catholics and Lutherans joined forces to recapture the city. The whole incident was seen by the enemies of Anabaptism as a vindication of their severe persecution of Anabaptism.

Obbe and Dirk Philips were among those who opposed the direction Anabaptism had taken in the Netherlands. They gathered together those peaceful Anabaptists who objected to the emphasis on the early approach of the millennium. When Menno Simons left the priesthood he joined this group and was ordained by Obbe. Obbe eventually left the movement in favor of a more spiritualistic, inward religion, apart from any organized church.

Menno Simons began his work as a Roman Catholic priest in 1524. He did not become an Anabaptist until 1536, over ten years after the beginning of the movement in Zürich. During those intervening years several events caused him to question his position as a Roman Catholic priest.

In 1528 while celebrating the Mass the thought came to him that the bread and wine were not actually changed, as the Roman Catholic teaching on the Mass suggested. He turned to Scripture to search for the early church's understanding and concluded that the church was wrong in teaching the physical presence of Christ in the communion.

In 1531 a certain Sicke Freerks was beheaded in nearby Leeuwarden for having been rebaptized. Menno once again searched the Scriptures but was unable to find support for infant baptism. He studied the positions of the reformers and found that their positions were not supported by Scripture. He concluded that infant baptism did not have a scriptural foundation. But in spite of these new understandings he remained within the Roman Church.

In 1534 the Münsterite sect came into this community and began to make inroads into his congregation. Menno had been promoted to the position of priest in his hometown community of Witmarsum and his reputation as an evangelical preacher had increased. He now had occasion to confer with the leaders of the Münsterites and, although he was impressed with their zeal, he felt they were misguided. He began to speak out against them, but with a troubled heart since he felt an underlying sympathy for their views of Scripture, the church, and Christian discipleship.

The tragedy of the Old Cloister Monastery is noted in the student magazine, page 30. This event intensified Menno's inner conflict and he later wrote:

> After this had transpired, the blood of these people, although misled, fell . . . hot upon my heart . . . I reflected upon my unclean carnal life, also the hypocritical doctrine and idolatry which I still practiced daily in appearance of godliness, but without relish. I saw that these zealous children, although in error, willingly gave their lives and their estates for their doctrine of faith. And I was one of those who had disclosed to some of them abominations of the papal system. But I myself . . . acknowledged abominations simply in order that I might enjoy physical comfort and escape the cross of Christ.[3]

Menno turned to God and pleaded for grace and forgiveness. The sinfulness that seemed foremost in his mind was his false pride, his love of ease and security, an aimless existence, and a timidity to do what he thought he should.

Even after this decision Menno continued to preach from his pulpit for nine months. Now he spoke openly of the word of repentance, of believer's baptism, and of his understanding of the Lord's Supper. He used his pulpit to attack the evils of the church. Later he described this period of time in the following way:

> In consequence, I began in the name of the Lord to preach publicly from the pulpit the word of true repentance to direct the people unto the narrow path and with the power of the Scriptures to reprove all sin and ungodliness, all idolatry and false worship, and to testify to the true worship, also baptism and the Lord's Supper according to the teaching of Christ, to the extent that I at that time had received grace from God. I also faithfully warned every one of the Münsterite abominations, viz., king, polygamy, earthly kingdom, the sword, etc., until after about nine months when the gracious Lord granted me His fatherly Spirit, aid, power and help, that I voluntarily forsook my good name, honor and reputation which I had among men and renounced all the abominations of Antichrist, mass, infant baptism and my unprofitable life, and willingly submitted to homelessness and poverty under the cross of my Lord Jesus Christ; in my weakness I feared God, sought out the pious and, although they were few in number, I found some who had a commendable zeal and maintained the truth. "Behold thus, my reader, the God of mercy, through His abounding grace which He bestowed upon me, a miserable sinner, has first touched my heart, given me a new mind, humbled me in His fear, taught me in part to know myself, turned me from the way of death and graciously called me into the

narrow path of life, into the communion of His saints. To Him be praise forevermore. Amen."[4]

On January 30, 1536, he renounced the Catholic Church of his own free will and went into hiding to spend some time in reflection and study. About a year later a delegation of six to eight brethren came to him and asked him to accept the office of elder and bishop of the brotherhood. C. J. Dyck comments, "To lead the fledgling Anabaptist group through this spiritual wilderness became the lot of Menno Simons; to sift truth from half-truth, oppose error with clear teaching, encourage the persecuted, correct the misguided and build the young church while himself being hunted as a heretic was to be his life."[5]

Menno married "a certain Gertrude" in 1536 and he and his family spent most of their life together as refugees. His wife and two of his children died before him, quite possibly from the rigors of refugee life. Although Emperor Charles V had placed a bounty on the head of Menno and forbade giving aid or shelter to him in any way or reading his books, Menno always managed to escape. In the last years of his life he was able to settle down on an estate called Fresenburg in Holstein. There, in spite of ailing health and being a cripple, he published pamphlets and booklets until his death in 1561.

What was the significance of Menno Simons? H. S. Bender notes that Menno was not the founder of the Anabaptist movement, and not even the Netherlands can be given credit for its beginning. Menno's contribution was giving leadership in faith and spirit and doctrine when it was most needed.

> Menno's greatness lay not so much in his eloquence, although he was a good preacher, nor in his literary craftsmanship, although he could write well for the common man. He was no great theologian, although he knew how to present the plain teachings of the Bible with force and clarity. He was not even a great organizer, although he rendered a real service in the guidance which he gave to the bishops and ministers of the growing church. Yet, Menno Simons was one of the great religious leaders of his day and land, perhaps the most outstanding religious leader of the Netherlands in his time. His work and influence have had permanent significance on the history of the people and church which bears his name, and through them his influence has reached the larger circles of the free churches of England and America.
>
> The greatness of Menno Simons lies in three factors of influence, his character, his writings, and his message. His character was a steadying, heartening, building influence in the long hard years of persecution and struggle from 1535 to 1560, with his deep conviction, unshakable devotion, fearless courage, and calm trust. His writings, though they seem at times, as gathered together in his complete works, to be repetitious and insignificant, included some admirable tracts for the times, pointed, plain, well-adapted to their purpose. They reached the common people at the right time, and were powerful agents in the building and strengthening of the church and in winning new adherents. But most of all it was the message of Menno Simons which made him a great leader in a great cause. He built no great system of theology, nor did he discover any great new or long-lost principle; he merely caught a clear vision of two fundamental Biblical ideals, the ideal of practical holiness, and the ideal of the high place of the church in the life of the believer and in the cause of Christ.[6]

For Menno, the church was the representative and agent of Christ on earth and as such it must be kept pure and remain faithful in its witness for Christ until He returned.

[1]Quoted by Roland Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1952, p. 102.
[2]Roland Bainton, *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*, p. 105.
[3]"Menno Simons," *Mennonite Encyclopedia* (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1957), p. 578.
[4]H. S. Bender, *Menno Simons: Life and Writings* (Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1936), p. 18.
[5]C. J. Dyck, *An Introduction to Mennonite History*, pp. 81-82.
[6]H. S. Bender, *Menno Simons: Life and Writings*, pp. 28-29.

Resources for further study

Augsburger, Myron S. *The Broken Chalice*. Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1971.

Bainton, Roland. *The Reformation of the Sixteenth Century*. Boston: Beacon Press, 1952.

Bender, H. S. *The Complete Writings of Menno Simons*. Scottdale, Pa.: Mennonite Publishing House, 1936.

Dyck, C.J. *An Introduction to Mennonite History*. Chapter 6.

Smith, C. Henry. *The Story of the Mennonites*. Chapter 2.

Mennonite Encyclopedia. "Menno Simons."

Audio-Visual

Faith of Our Fathers (slide set by Jan Gleysteen).

The Life of Menno Simons (Heritage Series Slide Set).

Menno's Reins, A Manitoba-based film which begins with Menno Simons and looks at subsequent Russian and Canadian Mennonite history.

Supplies

Map of sixteenth-century Europe
Student magazine for each student

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Introduce the lesson by reviewing the theme of persecution and take note on your map how and where Anabaptism spread.
2. Review "Melchior Hofmann and the revolutionary Anabaptists."

a. Present the additional information about the revolutionary Anabaptists using material in the Historical Summary and other readings.
b. Discuss the questions in the student magazine on page 30. Roland Bainton's comment about the less balanced spirits from the Introduction, page 28 above, may be helpful in answering question 1.

3. Review "The early years of Menno Simons," student magazine, page 30. Fill in the additional information on Menno's struggle with Roman Catholic doctrine and his encounter with the Münsterites.
4. Review "Menno's conversion to Anabaptism," student magazine, page 30.
   a. Have the students answer questions 1 to 3 in their manuals and then share answers with the class.
   b. In question 3 draw attention to the different setting that Menno had from Zwingli and Luther. Both Zwingli and Luther did not step outside the powerful protection and security they had from the beginning.
5. Read the excerpt from *The Broken Chalice* as a dramatic reading. Assign the different characters to different students. What impressions about Menno does it leave in the minds of your students?
6. What was the significance of Menno Simons? First have the students comment on this question and then draw attention to some of the points that Bender makes in his statement, page 30, of the Historical Summary above.

F. Alternative or additional activities

1. View and listen to the slide series on Menno Simons from *Faith of our Fathers.*
2. Use the *Heritage Series Slide Set* on Menno Simons to present the biographical information about Menno Simons.
3. View the film *Menno's Reins.*
4. Spend some time becoming familiar with some of Menno's teachings and writings. What were his views on capital punishment? discipline? the incarnation? (See *Menno Simons: Life and Writings* or *The Complete Works of Menno Simons,* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1956.)
5. Discuss or debate the question of how you feel about being referred to as a "Mennonite."

The Mennonite Search for a Home

A. Content outline

1. Continued persecution in Europe
   a. Switzerland and the Palatinate
   b. The Netherlands
   c. West and East Prussia
2. Emigrations to America
3. Emigrations to Russia

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson is to provide a bridge between the persecution and intolerance of the sixteenth century and the beginning of freedom and prosperity characteristic of the Russian and American settings.

C. Specific objectives

1. to become aware of the continuing persecution in Europe after Menno Simons and the gradual growth of tolerance
2. to become knowledgeable of the early emigrations of Mennonites to America
3. to understand the place of Russia in the Mennonite story
4. to recognize the haven of tolerance that America and Russia came to be for the Mennonites

D. Preparing the lesson

Introduction

This lesson will be one of those in which we skip through several centuries, from the time of Menno Simons to the emigration of the Mennonites to Russia. The teacher will again need to bring the various sections together and provide many missing links.

The theme of this lesson could be the movement from persecution to freedom. It begins with a time when persecution is still severe and moves to a time of tolerance and finally freedom.

This lesson also brings us as students of Mennonite history to a separating of our paths. Some of us will trace our ancestors back to those early emigrations to America; some of us have in our heritage the Russian experience; some of our forefathers came directly from Europe to North America at a later date. Teachers should seek to be aware of the different roots within the class, emphasizing those which are most relevant while at the same time introducing the students to the others.

Historical Summary

Continued and persistent persecution almost totally annihilated Anabaptism in Switzerland, the home of its birth. Executions here continued longer than anywhere else, well into the seventeenth century. Even after the death penalty was no longer applied, Mennonites were far from tolerated. Why were they persecuted so much longer in Switzerland than elsewhere? A constant charge against the Mennonites in a society with a very strong state-church tradition was that the Mennonites were separatists, refusing to conform to the rest of society. As the only free church in the land, it drew upon its head the wrath of the ecclesiastical authorities. Separation of church and state was a threat to the state religious system.

It was the secular authorities, however, who pursued the rigid laws of persecution most rigorously. The reasons, in the end, were political and not religious. When asked to justify the continuing persecution, the Bernese Council pointed to the Mennonites' refusal to take the oath of allegiance and to perform military service. Unlike in other countries, the Swiss cantons did not depend on a mercenary army

for defense but upon a national militia based on conscription. The Mennonite refusal to take an oath was thus seen as an act of civil disobedience and of disloyalty. Mennonites, consequently, were seen as belonging in the same category as the leaders of peasant revolts.

Mennonites in the rest of Europe—the Netherlands, Northern and Southern Germany—experienced initial persecution, and much earlier toleration than in Switzerland. Naturally, the level of persecution in the early stages varied in intensity, depending on the local situation. As indicated in the student magazine, persecution in the Netherlands was initially very severe, but by the beginning of the seventeenth century the Mennonites had established a good reputation for industry and integrity which made governments more sympathetic to them. The Mennonites experienced a golden age in the Netherlands in the seventeenth century, and made a significant contribution in trade and commerce, agriculture, and the fine arts. The price they paid for this material and cultural favor, however, was a gradual loss of the depth of conviction that their parents had held to.

In Northern Germany, in places like East Friesland, Schleswig-Holstein, and in cities like Emden and Krefeld, persecution was much less severe from the beginning than in Switzerland. In the marshy land of Schleswig-Holstein the Dutch Mennonite refugees were not only tolerated but were even given open protection from some of the noblemen. Before the end of the sixteenth century several congregations had been established in this region in places like Altona and Krefeld.

In South Germany the situation varied. Initially, especially in the Catholic regions, the persecution was severe. Even after the death penalty was no longer used, various forms of intolerance continued.

Meanwhile, during much of this time emigration from a place of persecution to one of greater tolerance was common. The New World of America and Czarist Russia were seen as places of tolerance and peace.

There were five major waves of emigrations to America during these first years, according to C. J. Dyck.[1] The first wave, as noted in the student magazine, settled in Germantown, Pennsylvania. In the second wave several thousand more people from the Swiss mountains and from the Palatinate along the Rhine River came to America from 1707 to 1756. All of the three to five thousand Mennonites who came to Pennsylvania at this time were of Swiss origin.

Wave three, from about 1815 to 1860, consisted of Amish Mennonites of Swiss background who left Alsace, Bavaria, and Heese, and settled in Ohio, Ontario, Indiana, and Illinois. Totaling about three thousand persons, their descendants later united with the descendants of the Mennonites of the first two movements to form the (Old) Mennonite Church.

Wave four involved about five hundred Mennonites who left Switzerland between the years 1830 and 1860 to settle in Ohio and Indiana. Of these, those who settled in Wayne County, Ohio, are largely in the Mennonite Church today, while those who settled in Adams County, Indiana, are General Conference Mennonite. In 1865-95 about three hundred Mennonites of Swiss extraction left the Palatinate and settled in Ohio, Indiana, and Illinois. This was wave five.

J. C. Wenger has pointed out that the early emigrations to North America came from the two trouble spots of the late seventeenth century, one in the territory of the Lower Rhine, the other in Switzerland. After the great suffering in Switzerland, many Mennonites decided to leave their native land for the surrounding territories. Many of these refugees went to the Palatinate. Repressive measures there led to further emigrations to surrounding areas as well as to North America. Wenger suggests that there were seven other reasons for a massive emigration of Palatinate Mennonites and other Germans at this time. They were: (1) war devastation, (2) heavy taxation, (3) an extraordinarily severe winter, (4) religious quarrels, (5) land hunger and the desire for adventure, (6) attractive colonial advertising, and (7) the benevolent and active cooperation of the British government.[2]

The emigrations to Russia were on a slightly larger scale and more en masse. The first major emigration in 1788 noted in the student magazine was the Chortitza Colony. Though each family was given 175 acres to farm, the ownership of the land belonged to the colony as a whole. Colonists could not sell, divide, or mortgage the land. Complete religious toleration was granted to the Mennonites, but they were not allowed to proselytize among members of the Orthodox state church.

The Czarina of Russia, Catherine II, died in 1796 and her successors renewed the efforts to bring more settlers to Russia. A second major group of Mennonites from Prussia, initially about 160 families, left for Russia in 1803. Between 1803 and 1806 about 360 families emigrated. Not only were they encouraged by the written guarantees of religious freedom and farming opportunities in Russia, but they continued to experience restrictions on religious and economic liberties in Prussia.

These later immigrants were wealthier, more established farmers than the first group. Their group also included teachers and ministers. Before they were allowed to leave Prussia, these emigrants were required to pay a ten percent emigration tax.

Settling in the level, treeless, fertile plain in the province of Taurida, along the Molotschna River, they prospered immediately. By 1840, forty-six villages had been established. The architecture of their houses was of Prussian style, with the house, barn and stable all under one roof. The gable end faced the street. The streets were lined with fruit and shade trees. Each farm had a fruit orchard.

The Russian government intended that the

Mennonite settlements should be a model for the rest of Russia. Consequently the colonists were given a great deal of local autonomy. They had complete control over their religion and education, and, by 1801, self-government in every colony. Each colony formed a separate unit of government consisting of the community or village assembly, composed of one representative from each farm, and an executive committee, consisting of the mayor (Schultze), two assistants (Beisitzer), and a clerk.

Thus the development from persecution to freedom had been completed for the Mennonites in two different parts of the world. They had come from a time of oppression and persecution to a time of freedom and prosperity.

[1]C. J. Dyck. *An Introduction to Mennonite History.*
[2]J. C. Wenger. *The Mennonite Church in North America* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1966).

Resources for further study

Dyck, C. J. *An Introduction to Mennonite History.* Chapters 9, 10, 11.
Friesen, P. M. *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia.* Translated by J. B. Toews, Abraham Friesen, Peter J. Klassen, Harry Loewen. Fresno, Calif.: Board of Christian Literature, 1978.
Schreiber, William I. *The Fate of the Prussian Mennonites.* Goettingen: The Goettingen Research Committee, 1955.
Smith, C. Henry. *The Story of the Mennonites.* Chapters 4, 5, 6.
Studer, Gerald C. *Christopher Dock: Colonial Schoolmaster.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1967.
Wenger, J. C. *The Mennonite Church in America.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1966.

Supplies

Student magazine for each student
Map of 16th century Europe
The time line

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Introduce the lesson and the content to be dealt with by referring to the time line and the map.
2. Review "Continued persecution," student magazine, pages 33, 34, and discuss the questions on page 34.

   In discussing question number 1, draw attention to the steady decline in the population of the Anabaptists in Switzerland and the gradual withdrawal into themselves by the Mennonite people to become the *Stille im Lande,* the "quiet in the land." Is that still part of the Mennonite identity?
3. Read through "Emigrations to North America," student magazine, pages 34, 36.
   a. Review the reasons for the emigration.
   b. Present the additional information about the reasons for emigration to North America. (See the Historical Summary above.)
   c. Consider some of the problems faced by emigrants. If you have people in your congregation who have recently emigrated to North America, have them share some of the problems and difficulties that they have become aware of.
4. Read "Emigrations to Russia" in the student magazine, pages 36, 37.
   a. Have the students compare the concessions granted by Catherine II with those granted by Frederick the Great in Prussia. How do the concessions compare with the situation of the early pioneers in America?
   b. Use a map to explain where the first settlement in Russia was.
   c. Take note of the fact that in both America and Russia the Mennonites settled in frontier regions which had only recently been gained from the native populations. The story of the Russian Tartars is not very different from that of the North American Natives.
   d. Present the additional material on the second emigration to Russia. Use the map once again to show the exact location of the settlement.
   e. Speculate on the effects that the new setting had on the Mennonites of Prussia.
5. Conclude the lesson by coming back to the theme of the movement from suppression to freedom. Consider the statement made by the Dutch minister in Amsterdam that the devil had found a more clever way of dealing with the Mennonites by stopping persecution and having them become interested in the material things of this world (student magazine, page 37).

F. Alternative or Additional Activities

1. If there are students in your class whose ancestors were among the early emigrants to North America, have them present the history in much greater detail. If any students have responded to the assignment given in lesson one, have them share it. Also consider making use of other local resources, written material as well as people, in gaining a greater awareness of the origins of your Mennonite community.
2. Have the students trace the origin of certain customs of the Mennonite church to their cultural settings in Europe.
3. Have a student read and report on *Christopher Dock: Colonial Schoolmaster* by Gerald Studer or the story of Christopher Dock in *Twelve Becoming* by C. J. Dyck (Faith and Life Press, 1973).
4. Show the film *The Coming of the Mennonites to North America* or *The Quiet in the Land.*

The Mennonite Experience in Russia

A. Content outline

1. Pre-revolution Russia
   a. Economic development
   b. Russianization reforms
   c. Emigration to North America
2. The Russian revolution and its aftermath

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson is to introduce the students to some of the events, themes, and stories of the Mennonite Russian experience.

C. Specific objectives

1. to become acquainted with the Mennonite commonwealth in Russia
2. to understand the relationship which the Mennonites had with the Russian government and how that relationship gradually deteriorated until it was completely severed by the revolution
3. to give opportunity for discussion of the contemporary situation of the Mennonites in Russia
4. to evaluate the Russian period of Mennonite history

D. Preparing the lesson

The Mennonites had come to Russia as refugees in the last quarter of the eighteenth century. Their story for the next one hundred years was one of freedom and liberty. It was an era of growth and prosperity in an environment which their forefathers would have considered a dream. In Russia, the Mennonites were given what seemed like an ideal situation to develop their Anabaptist principles. But this experiment in Mennonitism was brought to an end when many Mennonites once again became homeless refugees because of the revolution.

The reading in the student magazine speaks of the prosperity that had come to the Mennonites in Russia. For example, at his death in 1848, Johann Cornies owned 25,000 acres of land, a flock of 8,000 imported sheep, 400 horses and a large herd of thoroughbred cattle.

But such wealth was not general. In the Molotschna settlement in 1841 only 1,033 families out of 2,733 were land owners. The Mennonite population continued to increase rapidly while land ownership basically remained the same. By 1860, two out of three heads of families in Molotschna and one out of two in Chortitza were landless. Although there was some industry, and tradesmen and craftsmen were needed, the majority of the landless worked as hired hands or rented land from neighboring noblemen or nomadic tribes. Without land the people became second-class citizens, living on garden plots outside the villages.

The land problem was complicated by the fact that the land plots, according to the agreement with the Russian government, could not be broken up. In addition, the communal pastures and the surplus and reserved lands were used by the rich farmers. The Russian government encouraged this system because it wanted the rich farmers to have model farms.

Although some early attempts were made to deal with this problem, such as the establishment of the daughter Bergthal Colony by the Chortitza Colony, the situation became so critical that eventually the landless, finding the wealthy Mennonite clergy unwilling to act, petitioned the Russian government to step in. The severity of the problem now seemed to hit home among the Mennonites and a number of measures were taken, such as dividing up the

communal lands, purchasing land for the landless, and establishing daughter colonies. Together with the continuing development in manufacturing and the new emigrations, these measures alleviated the land problem considerably.

The Mennonites had come to Russia as a persecuted people with common religious convictions. A century of favor and prosperity in Russia saw them develop into a solid and closed sociological group, a state within a state, a Mennonite commonwealth. Their separateness had been encouraged by both the Czarist government and the Orthodox church. The inferior culture of the Russian peasant made it natural for the Mennonites to separate themselves from the Russians. The common language, religion, racial pride, and sense of superior culture of the Mennonites held them together.

The situation was not one that could last. Two developments within Russia at the time began to indicate the end to the privileged status. First, in the growing democratic spirit of the 1850s the special privileges granted to the Mennonites by the Czarist regime came more and more under fire. Secondly, the 1860s saw the developing of a sense of nationalism throughout Europe. Russia was no exception. A new spirit of Russianization gained ground there. These two factors were accompanied by a growing sense of jealousy and animosity towards the German colonists on the one side and an arrogant self-righteousness on the other. (Russian workers on Mennonite farms were often treated as inferior, eating and sleeping in separate quarters. Derogatory comments against the Russians were not uncommon.)

Russian nationalistic feelings mounted after the Crimean War. This began affecting the Mennonites in 1870 when an imperial decree proclaimed that the day of special privileges for the German colonists was over. Several changes were made with regard to land ownership, all of which threatened the solidarity of the Mennonite colonies. The Russian language was to become the official language of the government and schools. (A census taken in 1879 revealed that only 1 percent of all Mennonites, in spite of the presence of Mennonites in Russia for a hundred years, considered themselves Russian speaking.) Military exemption was to be abolished. The colonists were given ten years to accommodate themselves to become full-fledged Russian citizens.

The change that the Mennonites found to be the greatest threat to their survival was the possible loss of their military exemption. In the years from 1871 to 1874 a number of delegations were sent to St. Petersburg to try to work out a satisfactory solution. The fact that neither of the two chief spokesmen, Aeltester Leonard Sudermann and Aeltester Dyck, could speak Russian did not help their cause. By 1874, however, a program of noncombatant service was approved which called for forestry service or industrial work, not connected with the War Department during the time of peace, and hospital service during war times. The Mennonites were to be in charge of 80 percent of the forestry costs, including the daily provisions. The agreement was for twenty years. All Mennonite men were subject to the draft at age twenty-one. The term, initially for four years, was later reduced to three.

Meanwhile involvement of the Mennonite people with their Russian environment increased, partly because of the new language legislation. Mennonite hospitals served many non-Mennonites, business contacts increased, many Russians served the Mennonites as farm laborers, Mennonite intellectuals became more aware of Russian literature, and Mennonites had two members in the Russian parliament after the unrest of 1905, one belonging to the Octoberists and one to the Progressists. All of these involvements, however, were not sufficient to close the social, cultural, and economic gap that had developed between the Mennonites and their Russian neighbors.

The compromise that the Russian government was finally willing to make with the Mennonite people on the question of military service came too late and did not go far enough for many Mennonite people. Government officials now realized that the Mennonites were serious in not complying with the reforms and they sought ways of stemming the tides of emigration. Many were convinced to stay, but when the delegation that had gone to America returned with the report of the abundance of land and the assurance of religious freedom, emigration fever ran high. The emigrants faced problems of disposing of their land at a fair price and securing the necessary passports.

Only one-third of the Russian Mennonite population decided to emigrate in the 1870s. The others decided to stay, some pacified by the new promises of the Russian authorities and some out of a sense of missionary obligation to Russia. The world could not always provide an escape for the Mennonites and they would have to face the difficult situations, some argued. The bulk of those who decided to emigrate went in large groups, sometimes as whole villages and settlements.

Not all people who felt threatened by the Russianization program turned west. Some Mennonites were attracted to the wilderness of Turkestan, recently conquered by Russia but not yet under Russian administration. Although many Mennonites who eventually participated in this very difficult pilgrimage eastward were largely influenced by the desire for land and freedom, the movement was also inspired by the religious speculation that the end time was at hand and that Christ would return to a group of believers somewhere in the middle of Asia. Claas Epp, inspired by the German pietiest Jung-Stillung's book *Heimweh*, in which the hero gathers together a band of believers and leads them to meet the final kingdom of peace in Central Asia, became the focus of the chiliastic movement. By 1879 Epp was urging his followers

to sell their possessions and move with him to Turkestan. The first families set out in 1880. The journey was difficult and there were many tensions between Epp and other leaders. As Epp came to be seen more and more as a fanatic, divisions occurred. Some of these settlers did settle in central Asia and others left for the United States. Epp himself eventually predicted a date for Christ's return and declared himself to be the fourth person of the Godhead. He died without a following in 1913. (For a fascinating account of this story see *The Great Trek* by F. R. Belk.)

World War I, in which the German forces attacked Russia, came as the first severe blow to the Mennonites in Russia. The war provided a justification for the anti-German feeling that had been smoldering against the Mennonites since the 1880s. A hate campaign against German colonists was now conducted and all Germans were regarded as aliens. It was suggested that all Mennonite young men be transferred out of the strategic Ukraine to the coal mines of Siberia. The first action taken was the banning of the German language in the press and in public, except in formal worship. In 1915 a decree ordering all German colonists to sell their land equities within one year was issued. This policy was interrupted by the revolution.

The Bolshevik Revolution of 1917 was foreshadowed by a number of uprisings many years earlier. The autocratic power of the Czars and the social inequalities led to the volatile situation that brought about the collapse of the Czarist regime in March 1917. The inept and unsuccessful performance of Russia in World War I aided the collapse of the government. The moderates of Alexander Kerensky were unable to gain the support of the workers and peasants, and the Bolsheviks headed by Vladimir Ilyich Ulanov, better known as Lenin, gained control in November 1917. When civil war broke out between the Reds (Bolsheviks) and the Whites (Tsarists) chaos and terror struck the Mennonite villages in the Ukraine.

On November 8, 1917, Lenin signed a decree requisitioning without compensation all landed properties belonging to the crown, church, monasteries, and wealthy landowners for immediate distribution to the peasants. Mennonite settlements were now under the jurisdiction of local soviets (councils) and the peasant takeover began. Even more fearsome was the release of terror that the revolution brought. Social order was destroyed by the revolution and the civil war that followed. Bandits and former prisoners inflicted immeasurable terror. Probably one of the most famous of these bandits was Nestor Makhno, a man who had worked for German landowners and held an intense hatred for them. Makhno's troops, although for a time allied with the Bolsheviks, were basically independent terrorists who plundered the territory at will, carrying with them a black flag with the inscription, "Anarchy is the mother of all order."

The Ukraine became the front line for much of the conflict between the warring factions in the revolution. The Mennonite villages were occupied first by one side, then the other, and some saw the occupation of their villages change hands as many as twenty-three times. With each new occupation came suspicion and a new attempt to enlist soldiers. Some young men did join the White army, trained for some time by the German occupation forces which offered a respite from the chaos and terror for seven months in 1918. (See the discussion of the *Selbstschutz* in Session 12).

Hard on the heels of the murdering and the plundering came disease and famine. The invading bandits carried lice and disease and confiscated clothing and bedding. Horses and seed grain were taken. The situation was made worse by a severe drought. Malnutrition and starvation set in. Many Mennonites were saved from death by the efforts of the new organization, Mennonite Central Committee, formed in America on July 27, 1920, to deal with this crisis. MCC brought together into one organization several Mennonite organizations. The first shipment of relief supplies reached Constantinople on October 21, 1920. By 1922, 40,000 people were being fed daily. A total of 75,000 people including 60,000 Mennonites received aid. Meanwhile, as the political situation began to stabilize Mennonite leaders began the difficult task of reconstruction. But many Mennonites had lost all desire to rebuild in Russia and once again emigration fever hit the Mennonite people.

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Supplies

Student magazine for each student

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Introduce the lesson by reviewing how the Mennonites came to be in Russia.
2. Review reading "Economic development."
   a. Take note of the economic base of the Mennonite settlement. Is it accurate to refer to the Mennonite colonies in Russia as a Mennonite commonwealth, a country within a country?
   b. Discuss some of the problems that Anabaptists might experience when the society and church become closely identified with each other.
   c. Supply information from the Historical Summary above on the land problem. What does that problem say about what was happening to the Mennonites? Take note of how the problem was dealt with.
3. Review "Emigration again."
   a. Describe the Russian reform program. (See pages 36, 37 above.) Present this as information to explain the reason for emigration as well as an indication of things to come.
   b. Have students take note of the different attractions to United States and Canada.
4. Tell the story of the emigration eastward with Claas Epp. You can get information from Belk's *The Great Trek* or from Smith's *The Story of the Mennonites,* pages 294-299.
5. Review "The Russian revolution and its aftermath."
   a. Make sure students understand the background information about the civil war.
   b. Take note of the founding of MCC. Have the students indicate some of the present involvements of MCC in the world.

F. Alternate or Additional Activities

1. Do a further study of the history of the emigrants of the 1870s. If you live in the area where one of these groups has settled, visit a museum or historical sites. Have a local historian talk to you about pioneer days.
2. Have someone read and report on a local history that relates to the emigration of the 1870s.
3. Spend the hour reading together from a book like *The Russian Dance of Death.* Allow the reading to raise the question for discussion.
4. Invite a person who lived through the revolution in Russia to come to your class to talk about the experience or have someone do an oral interview with him/her and play it to the class. (For the most success in an oral interview, limit the interview to one hour. Prepare the questions in advance and allow the person to see them before the interview.)
5. Go through a pictorial presentation of Russian life like *Heritage Remembered* by Gerhard Lohrenz (Winnipeg: CMBC Publications, 1974), or the story of the Mennonite immigrants from Russia in *Brothers in Deed to Brothers in Need* by Clarence Hiebert (Faith and Life Press, 1974).

Further Migrations to North America

A. Content outline

1. Emigration to North America in the 20th Century
   a. From Russia in the 1920s
   b. From Russia in the 1940s and 50s
2. Mennonites in North American context

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson is (1) to take note of the continuing emigration of Mennonites to North America and (2) to investigate how the North American context has affected the Mennonite church.

C. Specific objectives

1. to become aware of the major emigrations to North America in this century
2. to gain some understanding of where these later emigrants settled
3. to reflect on the problems and challenges that have faced the Mennonite heritage in North America

D. Preparing the lesson

Historical Summary

When the Bolsheviks gained final control of the Ukraine in 1920 several adversities affecting the Mennonites in the Ukraine were apparent.

The Mennonites had identified themselves with the German occupation forces. They had looked to them for protection and some had allowed themselves to be given military training.

The Mennonites of the Ukraine were implicated in the eyes of the Bolsheviks as having identified and supported the White Resistance army. The fact that some Mennonites had formed self-defense units and fought with the White Army gave credence to that suspicion.

Mennonites were a national minority, characterized before the revolution by wealth, privilege, use of the German language, religious nonconformity, the refusal to bear arms, and occasionally, the exploitation of the working class. To overcome the suspicion in the minds of the Bolshevik government was impossible.

In addition to these problems, the Mennonites were in conflict in an irreconcilable way with their new government. Economically, their commitment to individual initiative clashed with the new socialism; religiously, their theism and pacifism clashed with the Soviets' atheism and militarism; administratively, their desire to remain independent clashed with the communist desire to change the fabric of the nation. These ideological clashes inevitably would lead to one crisis after another.

Under the peasant soviets (councils), Mennonite farmers were disenfranchised, compulsory grain deliveries were ordered, and severe taxes were levied. Machinery and any remaining stock had to be sold to meet the unreasonable demands of the state. The economic crisis reached a climax in 1919 and continued into 1924.

The leaders of the Mennonite people saw that they had also come to a cultural crisis. The period of isolation was over and assimilation into the Russian population was inevitable. The state had taken over control of education; churches were closed and turned into clubrooms and theaters; ministers lost all right and were readily exiled; recognition of conscientious objection status became next to impossible; and family life was undermined by the tightening control of the state.

In this situation, then, it was natural for the Mennonites to turn to the escape that had often

served them, emigration. In 1919 a general meeting of village representatives from Molotschna voted to send a special commission to Europe and North America to explore emigration possibilities. The study commission left Russia on January 1, 1920, to report on conditions in southern Russia and to investigate settlement possibilities.

Meanwhile attempts were also made at economic reconstruction in Russia. A conference was called in February of 1921, with representation from sixty villages. The conference resulted in an organization, Union of Mennonites in South Russia (VMSR), headed by a teacher, B. B. Janz. The tasks of the organization were several: to seek to work together with the government in bringing about economic reconstruction; to represent the Mennonite interests in pacifism; and unofficially to prepare the road for emigration.

The petition for emigration presented to the state on December 17, 1921, was at considerable risk. According to John Toews, "The Mennonite constituency bared its inmost thoughts to those in power and invited definite political action, especially since the petition clearly revealed Mennonite dissatisfaction with prevailing circumstances."[1] However, in the face of the dim prospects for immediate economic recovery, the leaders felt the Russian authorities might approve an attempt to remove surplus population and thus alleviate famine as well as allow for economic recovery.

> The document began by asserting that Russia provided no hope for the future development of the Mennonite colonies, then listed the circumstances which warranted such a conclusion: the poor prospects for a continued existense based on agriculture because of banditry and the destruction of farms, the poor harvest of 1921, the requisitioning of grain, and the complete lack of agricultural equipment. The prospect of American relief, they said, had a negative influence as it encouraged robbery and murder by the neighboring populations by creating a myth of abundance within the colonies. The quartering of soldiers in the area, they argued, had exhausted all available food supplies; precious seed wheat was consumed, and cattle and horses slaughtered. . . . The petition to emigrate further contended that an intolerant nationalism in southern Russia had begun agitating for the expulsion of all foreigners, creating severe hardships for the colonists.[2]

The decision to emigrate was underscored by a unanimous decision of the VMSR executive in February 1922.

Thus began the extremely complex and frustrating process of paving the way for emigration. The problems of gaining government permission to leave, which could be granted today and rescinded tomorrow, finding a home for the emigrants in some other country, getting medical certificates for the emigrants, and synchronizing transportation in Russia, port clearance, ship transportation, and transportation in the new land, all made the issue extremely complex.

In June 1922, Canada once again opened its doors to the Mennonites and emigration fever ran high among the Mennonites in Russia. Continuous setbacks in the emigration process, however, ruled out emigration in 1922 and allowed only 700 persons through to Rosthern, Saskatchewan, in 1923. In the next three years, however, things improved and by 1930, 20,200 Mennonites had come to Canada. Mass emigration was ended in Russia by 1927 and the doors to all emigration closed in 1930.

Forced collectivization began in Russia in October 1928. In a desperate attempt to escape the new society, 13,000 Mennonites made their way to Moscow in the fall and winter of 1929 to beg for emigration passports. The plight of these Mennonites received world attention but to the shame of the Western world, in spite of the willingness of the Russian government to allow some emigration, only Germany opened its doors as a temporary refuge to 5,671 refugees. The remaining Mennonites were forcibly returned or sent into exile in Russia's remote wilderness. Many children died, families were torn apart and the experience was one of horror and terror for these unfortunate people.

Meanwhile in North America, while the possibility of emigrating to the United States never materialized because of the emigration laws, the Canadian law prohibiting the entry of Mennonites, Doukhobors, and Hutterites was rescinded by Prime Minister Wiliam Lyon Mackenzie after his election in 1921. With the possibility of receiving immigrants, a permanent Canadian organization to deal with the situation was called into being on May 17, 1922. The new Canadian Mennonite Board of Colonization, headed by David Toews, began the work of gaining support for the venture among the Mennonites of Canada. At first the prevailing sentiment was against supporting the immigration. In spite of the lack of support, David Toews signed a contract with the Canadian Pacific Railway in which he, on behalf of the Board of Colonization, took responsibility for the credit advanced to bring over the Mennonites, the first of which arrived in Rosthern in July 1923. The arrival of the first immigrants, mostly from the Chortitza Colony, turned the tides of public opinion and the project now received enthusiastic support among Canadian Mennonites. The arrival of these *Russländer* (Russian Mennonites) was followed by the difficult task of paying the bill of transportation known as the *Reiseschuld,* the transportation debt. Immigrants and Canadians worked at paying off the debt. The importance of chairman David Toews in guiding this entire venture cannot be underestimated. Many of the new immigrants settled on farms in the prairie provinces, others settled in Ontario, and some made their home in British Columbia.

The story of the Mennonites who remained in

Russia under the reign of Stalin was one of continuing hardship. Many suffered under Stalin's repressive rule through exile and execution. Famine struck in 1932-33 and took the lives of 5 to 8 million Russian people; among them were 100,000 German speaking citizens. In 1935 Stalin initiated his great purge during which time many of the remaining Mennonite leaders and ministers were sent into exile. Men would be taken in broad daylight or at night and shipped to an unknown destiny, often never to be heard of again. This deportation of the men naturally brought renewed poverty to the Mennonite families. The women were forced to work in the fields and the children were now to be raised by the collectives. The impressive Mennonite commonwealth of some twenty years ago was rapidly heading for moral and material ruin.

The German occupation of the Ukraine in 1941 during World War II gave another opportunity for the remaining Mennonites to escape. Before the German troops arrived, however, many of the Mennonite men were deported, to the despair and sorrow of their families. When the German army once again had to retreat 35,000 Mennonites fled with them. Many died and many families were separated. Of those who were able to escape out of Russia, some 23,000 were later repatriated by the advancing Russian troops and sent to slave labor camps in Siberia. American, British, and French authorities initially assisted the repatriation of Russian citizens.

Those who were able to get to Western occupied zones were soon assisted by Mennonite Central Committee which enlisted the resources of the entire North American Mennonite community. Peter and Elfrieda Dyck and C. F. Klassen played important roles in this post World War II refugee movement. Since the doors to both Canada and United States were not open to mass immigration immediately following the war, the choice for a new home was South America. Nearly 5,000 were resettled in Paraguay, Uruguay, and Argentina. Some of these later found their way to Canada and the United States. Beginning in 1947 Canada also received a number of these refugees, taking a total of over 7,000. These people were scattered across the land, settling close to friends and relatives, most of them taking on work in the cities. With hard work and high postwar wages, they soon became economically established. They joined the Mennonite churches around them and very quickly became acculturated to the North American society.

[1] *The Lost Fatherland* (Scottdale, Pa., Herald Press, 1967), p. 67.
[2] *Ibid.*

Resources for further study

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Supplies

Student magazine for each student

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Review the status of the Mennonites in Russia as discussed in lesson 8.
2. Give the background to the emigration of the 1920s. Note some of the problems that were involved in the emigration movement.
3. Review "From Russia in the 1920s" and discuss the question on page 44.
4. If there are members in your class whose ancestors came to Canada in this emigration have them report on their experiences.
5. Review "From Russia in the 1940s." Ask the students to give their initial impressions and response.
   a. Give some of the background information from the Historical Summary above.
   b. Present the additional information on the emigration to South America and Canada.
6. Review the eight different waves of Mennonite emigration to North America that have been mentioned in these lessons.
7. Initiate some discussion on the question of the Mennonite experience in North America.
   a. Review section 1. Language.
   b. Find out if and when your church went through the language transition. How did it deal with the problem?
   c. Consider question 1 on page 47. Take note of how many of the Mennonites had come to identify the German language with the unique Mennonite religious emphasis.
8. Review section 2. Education and discuss question 2 on page 47.
9. Review section 3. Theology and discuss questions 3 and 4.

Alternative or Additional Activities

1. Spend more time studying the emigrations. Have students research the problems involved in the emigration.

   If your church is one that resulted from this emigration, have someone report on its beginnings and history.
2. Invite a guest who experienced one of these emigrations to talk to you and answer questions.
3. Have a student read and report on *The Wanderers* by Ingrid Rimland (St. Louis: Concordia, 1977).
4. Debate the resolution: Without private schools the unique Mennonite faith would soon be lost.
5. Have your class or a student do a report on the origins and purpose of a regional Mennonite private school.
6. View one of the films, *Prairie Pioneers, When Their Time Had Come,* or *The Coming of the Mennonites to North America.* Also available as filmstrips and cassettes are: *Mennonite Migrations to Ontario, Mennonite Migrations to Western Canada, Mennonite Way of Life,* and *Mennonite Contributions to Canadian Society.*
7. Emigration of Mennonites out of Russia in the last years has continued. Some of these "Umsiedler," as they are known, have come to Canada and the United States. Have someone investigate the story of the Umsiedler and present it to the class.

For the Next Session:

Assign someone to read and review the essays on John Oberholtzer and H. S. Bender in *Twelve Becoming.*

10.

The Mennonites of North America

A. Content outline

1. The formation of the General Conference Mennonite Church
2. The Mennonite Brethren reform in Russia
3. The Mennonite Church

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson is to introduce the students to the three largest Mennonite groups in North America, and to realize the diversity within the Mennonite church.

C. Specific objectives

1. to become acquainted with the formation of the General Conference Mennonite Church
2. to gain an understanding of the division of the Mennonites in Russia which led to the formation of the Mennonite Brethren Church
3. to understand the formation and nature of the Mennonite Church

D. Preparing the lesson

One of the embarrassing facts about the Mennonite church is the tremendous amount of division within it. It is not strange that people often find it confusing and difficult to know who the Mennonites are. This lesson will examine some of the major groups of Mennonites, all of them coming out of renewal movements. It could well be expanded to consider other groups within your vicinity.

The Mennonites who had come to America were not acculturated very quickly. Their heritage in the Old World had emphasized separation from the world. Persecution had discouraged the witness of the Word and had forced them to concentrate on living the holy life in their closed communities. This estrangement from society continued in America and was reinforced by three events.

The first was the American Revolution. Once again the Mennonites found themselves called undesirables because they refused to take up arms against the British king. The second movement which the Mennonites resisted was that of public education. The church officially condemned state schooling. A third movement which the Mennonites generally rejected was the religious revivalism that swept America. The Mennonites were as a whole opposed to the new evangelical movement, regarding its pietistic base as superficial. "They had been trained in the suppression of feeling, not only in religion but also in everyday life. Practical virtues and stability in the face of difficulties were to them the traditional tests of true religion."[1]

The General Conference Mennonite Church

The new challenges became more difficult to the Mennonite church as frontier leadership had to settle for less education. Tradition and the ways of the pioneers became the guide for separating between the essential and the nonessential. This traditionalism often led to an emphasis on external forms and customs. Often there was little room for the working of the Holy Spirit. When the signs of renewal came, a confrontation between the new and old was inevitable. The confrontation was brought to a head by John Oberholtzer.

Oberholtzer was a man of ability and initiative. He introduced a number of programs which raised controversy within his congregation. Concerned about the low level of education in the church, he introduced Sunday school and catechism for those being baptized. He accepted preaching invitations from other

denominations and contrary to the opinion of his fellow church leaders, he saw persons from these denominations as fellow believers in Christ.

The actual division came over three matters. The first issue was the wearing of a "round coat," a plain-collared frock coat of pre-1880s fashion required for ministers and deacons. Oberholtzer ignored that expectation, until eventually he was persuaded to wear the appropriate type of coat. Meanwhile he had come to believe that problems like this would be more easily settled if the Franconia Conference would (1) keep minutes of business sessions of the conferences and (2) introduce a constitution with the regulations of procedure on matters of disagreement. It would thus be possible to set up definite standards and provide rules for deliberation. These became the other two issues.

Coats and constitutions had become the symbols of a clear-cut division. One side favored the introduction of new methods and was willing to accept outside ideas and influence. The other side believed that such willingness meant the loss of the Mennonite heritage. The final outcome was a division in 1847. Fourteen congregations followed Oberholtzer to form the East Pennsylvania Conference of the Mennonite Church. They became known as the "new" Mennonites to distinguish them from the "old" Mennonites. It was this group that united with the German Evangelical Mennonite Congregation to form the General Conference Mennonite Church.

The initial members in the new conference consisted of two kinds: Mennonites who became dissatisfied with the traditional ways of their Swiss and South German immigrant forefathers, and Mennonites who came from South Germany one hundred years later, in the mid-nineteenth century. The congregations of Ohio, Indiana, and Missouri which had come directly from Switzerland between 1817 and 1854 were added as a third group. The fourth and largest group to join the General Conference was made up of Mennonites who came from Russia to the United States and Canada. Other smaller groups also joined, some new to North America and others stemming from the Amish or (Old) Mennonites.

The Mennonite Brethren

Meanwhile in Russia the separation of the Mennonite Brethren from the *Grosse Gemeinde* (the large congregation) also came as part of a renewal movement. This separation had been preceded some forty-five years earlier by the formation of the *Kleine Gemeinde* (the small church or Evangelical Mennonite Church). Under the leadership of Claus Reimer, the *Kleine Gemeinde* had protested against the payment of war contributions to the Russian government and against the use of corporal punishment in the Mennonite colonies, as well as against certain other laxities. At the time of the Mennonite Brethren reform, there were other men of vision and concern, like Bernhard Harder, an evangelist and teacher, Bernhard Fast and Johann Harder, elders in the Ohrloff church, actively opposing the corruption in the church.

The "Document of Secession" signed by the Brethren was not a Confession of Faith but a statement revealing the causes for the formation of the Mennonite Brethren church. The main charges of decadence in the church were never publicly refuted by the Mennonite elders, but as the Mennonite Brethren historian J. A. Toews points out, they were far too sweeping and too severe in character. However, J. A. Toews also notes that the Mennonite Brethren movement was an attempt to remain true to the historic Anabaptist-Mennonite confession. The Brethren wanted to remain Mennonite, not on the basis of birth, but upon rebirth.[2]

It was not until March 4, 1866, that the Brethren, through their envoy to the Russian government, Johann Claassen, received official confirmation of full religious and civil privileges. In the meantime the Colony Administrative Office had made things difficult for the new group in many ways, even threatening to expel them from the Mennonite settlements. Already in March of 1860, however, one of the elders of the church, Johann Harder, had refused to support the methods used to deal with the dissenters. The other elders gave recognition to the Mennonite Brethren by 1863. Although hostility continued, the movement grew. One of its major positive side effects was the reform that it encouraged in the larger church.

Although the mode of baptism had not been an issue originally, it became one early in the history of the new movement. The early Brethren had not made baptism by immersion obligatory. As late as September 1863 it was possible for non-immersed members to partake in communion. However, that changed after 1863, and it was only in 1963, after many years of "closed communion," that the Mennonite Brethren General Conference accepted a resolution which returned to the open communion policy of the earliest Brethren. The issue of baptism continues to raise feelings of tension between the Mennonite Brethren and other Mennonites.

The Mennonite Church

The Mennonite Church has also been strongly influenced by renewal. The names John Funk, John S. Coffman, and Daniel Kauffman were important in the new life that came to the Mennonite Church in the nineteenth century. In his article on the Mennonite Church in the *Mennonite Encyclopedia,* H. S. Bender divided the history of the Mennonite Church into four major periods: Colonial 1683-1783; Westward Migration 1783-1860; Strain and Stress (overlapping) 1840-90; Great Awakening 1890-1910; Consolidation and Forward Movement 1910- (Vol. 3, pp. 612 ff.).

In general the Mennonite Church has maintained a strong position of nonconformity to the world. There has been an emphasis on simplicity in life and customs. Theater attendance, wearing of jewelry, the swearing of oaths, smoking and drinking, participation in politics and office-holdings, and membership in unions have been some of the things disapproved of. Worship has tended to be simple. Singing has often been without the accompaniment of musical instruments. Footwashing has been observed and women have worn prayer veils.

The Mennonite Church has maintained a deep historical consciousness, a strong sense of mission, and a deep social concern. It strongly supports MCC and Mennonite Disaster Service. The Mennonite Church has a strong publishing record and supports a number of educational institutions, including Goshen College, Goshen Biblical Seminary and Eastern Mennonite College and Seminary.

In recent years the Mennonite Church has been involved in a number of programs of cooperation together with the General Conference Mennonite Church. Among these are the Associated Mennonite Biblical Seminaries, the Foundation Series curriculum and other publishing projects. A number of local congregations have dual memberships in the sister conferences. The two conferences have found that they have much in common and many of the issues that have separated them no longer seem to be present.

[1]S. F. Pannabecker, *Open Doors: A History of the General Conference Mennonite Church* (Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1975), p. 13.
[2]*A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church* (Fresno, Calif.: Board of Christian Literature, General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1975), p. 36.

Resources for further study

C. J. Dyck. *An Introduction to Mennonite History.* Chapters 12, 14, 15.

_____ *Twelve Becoming.* Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1973.

Friesen, P. M. *The Mennonite Brotherhood in Russia.* Translated and edited by J. B. Toews, Abraham Friesen, Peter J. Klassen, Harry Loewen. Fresno, Calif.: Board of Christian Literature, General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1978.

Pannabecker, S. F. *Open Doors: A History of the General Conference Mennonite Church.* Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1975.

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Toews, J. B. *A History of the Mennonite Brethren Church.* Fresno, Calif.: Board of Christian Literature, General Conference of Mennonite Brethren Churches, 1975.

Wenger, J. C. *The Mennonite Church in America.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1966.

Supplies

Student magazine for each student
Reformation Family Tree

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Spend a few minutes naming the different Mennonite groups in your region. What do you know about each?
2. Review "The General Conference Mennonite Church," student magazine, pages 48, 49.
   a. Consider the questions at the end of the reading, page 49.
   b. Provide resources for the class to investigate the division between Oberholtzer and the Franconia Conference or present the background and causes of the conflict yourself.
   c. Consider the question of whether Oberholtzer's way of dealing with the conflict was the right way.
   d. Have someone give a brief review of the essay on John Oberholtzer in the book *Twelve Becoming* by C. J. Dyck.
   e. Investigate the present work of the General Conference Mennonite Church. What are some of the major areas of work? What are some of the characteristics of the General Conference Mennonite Church? The annual yearbook put out by the General Conference would be helpful in doing this.
6. Review "The Mennonite Brethren Church," student magazine, pages 49, 50. Discuss the questions on page 50.
7. Review "The Mennonite Church," student magazine, pages 50-52.
   a. Discuss the questions, page 52.
   b. Have students do group research on John S. Coffman, Daniel Kauffman, and Harold S. Bender and report back to class.
8. Look at the Reformation Family Tree and see how the three groups studied in this session fit into the total picture.

F. Additional or Alternative Activities

1. If there is a church of another Mennonite group in your area, arrange to visit it and to meet with its pastor or invite the pastor or a member to come to your class. Take note as a class of things which this church has in common with your group and things which are different. Ask the pastor to talk about some of the characteristics of the particular Mennonite group.
2. Do further research on a group of Mennonites in your vicinity that has not been mentioned. Find out from where they stem and what their uniqueness is. Meet with people who can explain some of the background and characteristics to you.

3. Read the story of Harold S. Bender from *Twelve Becoming,* and discuss it in class.
4. View the film *Hazel's People* as an example of the clash between the old and the new among the Mennonite people. Or have someone read the book *Happy as the Grass was Green* by Merle Good and report to the class.
5. Read the story "Anna Warkentin Willms (1824-1910), by Mary Regehr Dueck in *Full Circle,* edited by Mary Lou Cummings (Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1978).
6. Have someone review the novel, *Trailblazer for the Brethren* by Elizabeth Suderman Klassen (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1978).
7. Do a study of the origin of your district/provincial/national conference. Have a leader or someone involved in one of these conferences explain to you how the different conferences relate to one another.
8. Have a panel respond to the question: Why do you think there have been divisions within the Mennonite church?

Amish, Hutterites, Old Colonists: The Separate Way

A. Content outline

1. The Hutterites
2. The Amish
3. The Old Colonists
4. The life of separation from the world

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson is to introduce the students to three Anabaptist groups who have chosen to live separate from the rest of the world. The lesson should give students an opportunity to discuss further the theme of separation from the world.

C. Specific objectives

1. to become familiar with the origins of the Hutterite, Amish, and Old Colony movements
2. to become aware of how these various groups live today in our society
3. to deal with separation from the world as one of the major themes of Mennonite/Anabaptist history

D. Preparing the lesson

For most Mennonites the trend in North America has been toward rapid assimilation into their adopted culture. Some Anabaptist groups have, however, resisted that assimilation with all their energy. Three groups which are part of the Anabaptist family tree, although they originate at very different times and places, have had the common theme of a radical separation from the world. As those who have become acculturated by our society and more receptive to the values of the world around us, we have often tended to ridicule these groups and dissociate ourselves from them. However, they are our brothers and sisters and we can learn from them.

The Hutterites

From their inception, the Hutterites have sought to recover and emulate the pattern of life of the early Christians. The words from the book of Acts describing their communal lifestyle (Acts 4:32) have inspired the Hutterites through the years. From the time of Jacob Hutter the Hutterite people have sought to be a cohesive, communal Christian fellowship. The importance of living communally in pursuing a true Christian lifestyle was recognized by Hutter. New Testament communalism, he and his descendants believed, could only be practiced in separation from the world because of the weakness of human nature, a nature given to materialism, pride, and vanity. Only through strong group guidelines, pressure, and authority could a Christian control that nature.

The Hutterites believe that values are shaped at a very young age. Consequently, children must be helped to overcome their covetous will and selfish desire and become part of the sharing community very early in life. Already at eighteen months, an infant may be cared for by the colony nursery staff and will in that way be introduced to its peers and adults outside its immediate family circle. Preschool will continue to help the youngsters learn to share with their peers and relate to Hutterites other than their parents.

This attempt to pass on the values of the forebears is continued and intensified as the children grow older. Children are clearly taught those things which they are expected to do in the community and those which are unacceptable. Thus, the belief that the "community of goods" is God's will becomes a part of the child. The child is taught that disobedience, his grasping and greedy spirit, brings disorder by not recognizing that from the beginning God

created all things for common use. Man continually wants to take private possession of the things of God. "Carnal man is viewed as living in perpetual covetousness by making property, food, land, and 'created things' the objects of private gain. The sun and moon, the air, and all material things are for the good of all men and to make them private property is to ignore God's order."[1]

Perhaps the greatest threat in North America to maintaining these communal values has been the public school system. The reactions of the school superintendents in a committee charged to investigate the Hutterites in 1959 in Alberta, are typical: "The committee felt that the very things the Hutterites tried to avoid in Canadian society—competition, higher education, private ownership, and patriotic attitudes—were the things they needed most. . . . In a later section the report complains that Hutterites have 'no loyalty to the country in which they live' (presumably because most colonies do not fly the national flag or sing the national anthem in school—ceremonies considered almost idolatrous) and that 'responsibilities of citizenship are not accepted' (because Hutterites do not vote or hold public office)."[2]

Hutterites, however, believe that their communal life is based on Scripture and that only through the divinely created fellowship separated from the world can God be properly obeyed and honored. In their common life they represent the faithful church, the community of God's elect. They believe that from the beginning God had commanded the communitarian way of life in which all of life and all activity was sacred. They feel that there is a division between the carnal and the spiritual world and each must go its separate way. Hutterites aim to live separate from the carnal world. Separation is ordained by God. "The community of the church of Christ has been sought out, selected, and accepted by God through Christ to be a people for himself, holy and without blemish, and it has been separated from all nations so that it might serve God with one mind and heart. Its law is the law of God and all temporal things are foreign to it."[3]

The Amish

The Amish, unlike the Hutterites, do not live communally, and there is greater diversity among them. The Amish have experienced a number of divisions. Many would not be recognized as the traditional Amish that the media tell us about. The largest segment of the Amish community in Ontario, for example, makes up the Western Ontario Mennonite Conference. They have dropped not only the Amish name, but many of the distinctive Amish beliefs and practices as well.

A constant theme throughout the history of the Amish, however, has been that of separation from the world. For the Amish, like for the Anabaptists, the kingdom of God is not the kingdom of this world. The Christian belongs to the kingdom of God and must keep himself "unspotted from the world." The Christian must live separate from persons who live according to the desires and goals of this world.

Passages from the Bible which emphasize the need for separation from the world are stressed. The message of the Bible, it is believed, is epitomized in two passages. "Be not conformed to this world, but be ye transformed by the renewing of your mind that ye may prove what is that good and acceptable and perfect will of God." This determines for the Amish a different dress and behavior from that of the rest of the world. Another favorite passage is: "Be ye not unequally yoked together with unbelievers; for what fellowship hath righteousness with unrighteousness? and what communion hath light with darkness?" On the basis of this passage, marriage with non-Amish persons and partnerships in business with outsiders is forbidden. The Amish see themselves as a separate people, a people chosen to live in God's kingdom.

One part of this doctrine of separation is the belief in nonresistance. The Amish believe that Christ has forbidden Christians to use violence and to take part in war. The words of Jesus, "My kingdom is not of this world: if my kingdom were of this world, then would my servants fight," are taken seriously. The Amish, like their Anabaptist forefathers, do not believe in self-defense or defending their possessions. In all ways the Amish see themselves as "strangers and pilgrims" in the present world.

The Old Colonists

The Old Colony Mennonites were the most conserative among the Russian Mennonites that emigrated to North America in the 1870s. Mennonites in Manitoba had settled on both sides of the Red River. The Old Colony Mennonites had filled the western end of the West Reserve. Resisting any encroachment of municipal government and public schools on their authority, they also strongly opposed the breaking up of villages and the adoption of the English language. At the heart of their life philosophy was a simple and steadfast faith in God. Their ambition was to reestablish the closed, autonomous colonies on the Russian model. Joy and satisfaction lay in conforming to the will of God as interpreted by the bishop. Raising large families, keeping a good household, and living a well-ordered life in social conformity and agricultural productivity were virtues to strive for.

Beginning already in 1880 the provincial government, in the opinion of the Old Colonists, began to infringe upon the solidarity of their community. In that year the government began inaugurating municipal government. The Old Colonists, fearing interference from outside, refused to cooperate with the provincial authorities in any way.

Next arose the question of education. The federal Canadian government had given the Mennonites the right to educate their children, a promise which, they later discovered, was not within the jurisdiction of the dominion government to grant according to the constitution. In 1890 the Manitoba government passed the

Manitoba Schools Act which stipulated that public schools in the future would be nonsectarian. English was to be the only language of instruction. Compulsory attendance, however, was not stipulated, so the Mennonites reverted to or continued their private schools. Although one of these private schools, the Mennonite Collegiate Institute at Gretna, was established in 1889 to train teachers for these schools, many Old Colony schools suffered under unqualified teachers.

In 1907, in the hope of instilling patriotism and a sense of British tradition among the German-speaking Mennonites, the provincial government decreed that all public schools would henceforth fly the Union Jack. This legislation was met with mass absenteeism of Mennonite children. Fearing the ever increasing encroachment of the government on their values, some Mennonites now decided to migrate further west into Saskatchewan.

The conflict between the Manitoba government and the Old Colony Mennonites was brought to a head when the School Attendance Act was passed. Making use of the war-time nationalistic feelings and support, attendance at public schools became mandatory for all children between the ages of seven and fourteen unless they were receiving instruction privately at a school which met provincial standards. A concerted effort was made to do away with the private schools which were not meeting the standards of the government. While this was no hardship for the more "progressive" Mennonites, the Old Colonists simply ignored the public schools. The government, by the fall of 1918, was using fines and imprisonment to deal with the civil disobedient Mennonites.

Eventually the Old Colony leaders felt it essential to leave Canada in order to retain their separateness. A delegation left for South America on July 15, 1919, to explore the possibility of settling there. While the more liberal Mennonites were willing to compromise and cooperate with the world at large, the Old Colonists and some other conservative groups believed the cost was too high. For the sake of their separateness they left Canada for a new home.

For the Old Colony Mennonites, the community and the church were very important. Although the Old Colonists did not practice common ownership of goods, they were an economic social unity similar to the Hutterites. The Old Colonists believed themselves to be a people of God who had made a covenant with him. Salvation, for them, was more corporate than individual, hence the great emphasis on conformity, on keeping the villages intact, and on group separation from the world.

The overall theme which has provided the focus for a consideration of these groups has been that of separation from the world. This emphasis on separation has allowed these groups to make several contributions to our society and more specifically to the Anabaptist heritage. Much more time could be spent developing these contributions, among which one could list the following: the Hutterite emphasis on community in the face of the individualism of our time, the emphasis on caring and mutual aid found in each of the groups and the understanding of the church in those terms, the deep-seated respect toward the land and environment that characterizes the Amish and Old Colony Mennonites, the willingness to accept a lifestyle different from the one dictated by the fashions and fads of the day, and the desire to be a witness to the fact that the kingdom of God has come. The rest of us in the Anabaptist heritage need continually to be reminded of these emphases.

[1]John A. Hostetter, *Hutterite Society* (Baltimore: The Johns Hopkins University Press, 1974), p. 147.
[2]David Flint, *The Hutterites* (Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975), pp. 58, 59.
[3]Hostetter, p. 147.

Resources for further study

Dyck, C. J. *Introduction to Mennonite History.* Chapter 13.
Flint, David. *The Hutterites: A Study in Prejudice.* Toronto: Oxford University Press, 1975.
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Sawatzky, Leonard H. *They Sought a Country: Mennonite Colonization in Mexico.* Berkeley, Calif.: University of California Press, 1971.
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Smith, Elmer S. *Among the Amish.* Witmar, Pa.: Applied Arts, 1964.

Supplies

Student magazine for each student
Reformation Family Tree

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Introduce the lesson by reading John 17. Note the theme of being in the world but not of the world. Relate this theme to the lesson.
2. Review "The Hutterites," student magazine, pages 53-55. Take up the discussion questions from the student magazine, page 55.
3. Review "The Amish," student magazine, page 55.
   a. Share the Scripture verses often used to support the separate stand taken by the

Amish. Have the students comment on whether they agree with the interpretation of these verses.

b. From the information given in the teacher's manual above, explain further what separation means for the Amish.

4. Review "The Old Colony Mennonites," student magazine, page 57.
   a. Give the additional historical information.
   b. Discuss the questions on page 57.
5. Discuss: What are some of the positive values that these groups who emphasize separation can teach us?
6. Find the three groups studied in this lesson on the Reformation Family Tree.

Alternative or Additional Activities

1. Visit a Hutterite colony, an Amish settlement, or an Old Colony church.
2. Have a minister or representative from one of the groups being studied come for a discussion to your class.
3. Borrow several copies of W. O. Mitchell's drama, *The Devil's Instrument*, and read through it together. (The copyright belongs to the author, 3031 Roxboro Glen Road, Calgary, Alberta.)
4. View the film, *Hutterite Life*.
5. View a film on the Amish, *Beyond this Land, The Mennonite Story, or The Amish: A People of Preservation.*
6. Another group which has emphasized separation to quite an extent is the Holdeman Mennonites. If you have a Holdeman (Church of God in Christ Mennonite) group in your area become familiar with its history as well as its present way of life. If possible invite a minister or other church leader to speak to your class.

12.

Pacifism in Mennonite History

A. Content outline

1. The Anabaptist vision of following Jesus
2. Pacifism in Mennonite history
   a. Early Anabaptism
   b. *Selbstschutz* in Russia
   c. Conscientious Objection in North America
3. Militarism in contemporary society
   a. The problem of war tax
   b. The military weapons industry

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson is to have students gain a better understanding of the Mennonite principle of pacifism by considering it in its historical context.

C. Specific objectives

1. to gain an understanding of the roots of Mennonite pacifism
2. to consider several historical situations where the Mennonite belief in pacifism has been a factor
3. to discuss the issue of pacifism as it relates to Mennonites today

D. Preparing the lesson

One of the amazing things about the Christian church is the way it has so often done precisely what Jesus admonished his followers not to do. The teachings of Jesus on nonviolence and his challenge to love one's enemies are indisputable. "Ye have heard that it was said, Thou shalt love thy neighbor, and hate thine enemy; but I say unto you, Love your enemies, and pray for them that persecute you," are the words of Jesus. Yet, those who have spoken of Jesus as their Lord have more often than not believed that Jesus didn't really mean what he said here. It was an ideal that he presented primarily to make us realize how sinful we are, said Martin Luther. The position of nonresistance, some Christians have held, is both naive and untenable in a society of sin and evil. Other groups have not seen any conflict between the ethics of the state and the ethics of the church. For example, a Presbyterian minister said:

> We are fighting not only for our country, and for the democracy . . . of the world, . . . but for the Kingdom of God. . . . If this is God's war we should have Christian soldiers to fight it . . . . (We cannot) draw any line between Christianity and patriotism. . . . The two go together. . . . The Church of Christ itself must enter the war. . . . Every Presbyterian church should be a recruiting station.[1]

Many contemporary Christians would, at best, see the issue of pacifism as an addition which is not part of the centrality of the gospel. It is clear from history that the early church, until the time of Constantine in the fourth century, was largely pacifist. The writings of this time indicate a strong emphasis on nonresistance. However, soldiers who were converted to Christianity at the end of the second century were remaining in the army. By A.D. 416 the Empire had gone as far as to forbid non-Christians to serve in the army. By A.D. 350 the church theologian, Athanasius, instrumental in developing orthodox Christology, made the statement, "Murder is not permitted, but to kill one's adversary in war is both lawful and praiseworthy."[2]

We have seen that the early Mennonite founders believed that the church should be made up of regenerated believers who came into church membership voluntarily and who desired to live according to New Testament standards. For them the Word of God was the

only rule of faith and practice. Consequently a great emphasis was placed on discipleship, a literal obedience to the teachings of Jesus, and a faithful following in his footsteps. After a diligent search of the Scriptures, the Anabaptists were convinced that the way of Jesus was the way of the cross. The way of the cross, they also noted, led to God's affirmation in the form of the resurrection. If the Christian would take the good news of Jesus seriously, he could have no part in the use of the sword, the exercise of vengeance, and the taking of human life. Although the state was necessary to control sinful society, church and state were to be completely separated, since Christians are called to live a life of nonresistance.

The Mennonite belief in pacifism over the centuries has occasionally suffered severe erosion but it has never been forgotten. Under the liberalism and materialism of the Golden Age in Holland, pacifism suffered a tremendous decline among the Mennonite population so that, during World War I, only one Dutch Mennonite took a stand as a conscientious objector. Since that time, however, a spirit of revival has turned the church back to its original evangelical and nonresistant principles.

In Switzerland the severe persecution over a long period of time took a heavy toll, not only in the number of Mennonites, but also in their nonresistant convictions. The Mennonites who did not emigrate eventually accepted military service when conscription was introduced in the nineteenth century. Noncombatant service was a possibility for them.

While Mennonites were seldom asked to perform actual military service in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, since at that time armies consisted of professional, hired soldiers, toward the close of the eighteenth century conscription began to be introduced. With Napoleon's rise to power, after 1799, this became the universal practice on the European continent. The increase in militarism and the pressure that this placed on the Mennonites in Prussia was noted in a previous lesson. The Mennonites were required to make financial contributions to a military academy and in 1814 a universal military training law was passed. As a result, many Mennonites emigrated to Russia and America at this time. Those who remained were allowed military exemption on condition that they pay a heavy tax in lieu of personal service. In 1867, at the founding of the North German Confederation, a new military service law was enacted, with no exemption for Mennonites. This brought an end to the possibility of nonresistance for the German Mennonites, and more now emigrated. Those who stayed accepted noncombatant military service and gradually gave up their objection to war until there was almost complete abandonment of the nonresistant faith among the Mennonites.

One of the factors that attracted the Mennonites to Russia was the guarantee of military exemption. This policy was in effect until 1870 when all special privileges were taken away from the Mennonites. Because of the threat of mass emigration, however, the Russian government did allow for alternate service, forestry work during peace time and perhaps hospital service during war time. However, the Mennonite church had to finance this alternative venture. After the Communist revolution, conscientious objection status became very difficult to attain, although a few cases were reported by Mennonite refugees as late as 1935.

The student magazine speaks about the Mennonite resistance movement in Russia during the days of terror. From the standpoint of the larger Russian civil war the significance of the self-defense units was negligible, but in terms of the impact on the Mennonites it represented ". . . a massive participation in armed violence unknown to a group whose loyalty to the peace principle had remained intact for 400 years."[3] The extent of the Mennonite involvement in the *Selbstschutz* varied from one region to another. In some areas *Selbstschutz* advocates actually initiated conscriptions and did not tolerate conscientious objectors.

> In the Halbstadt volost a special congress with representatives from many villages met in Rückenau. The rising threat of renewed banditry as well as the fear of retribution (for previously stolen goods retrieved with the help of occupation troops) dominated the meeting. Village watchmen were useless. A proposal to mobilize all men between 30 and 37 was presented to the congress. A respected delegate from Rosenort pointed to Mennonite history and examples of God's help in the past. For his efforts he was threatened with expulsion by the chairman. In the Selbstschutz mobilization which followed, conscientious dissenters were frequently not tolerated and there were instances of actual violence against such individuals.[4]

The fact that the Mennonites in the Ukraine sought to reconstruct the peace principle in subsequent years, and condemned the *Selbstschutz* as both a tactical blunder and a violation of the historic peace position is perhaps evidence that support for the *Selbstschutz* was a minority position. But the fact remained that the Mennonite church as a whole had not been able to stand up to its peace principle when a severe crisis had come. John Toews suggests that the reasons were many. They were complicated by the successive crises caused by the civil war and revolution, so that the traditional structures and means for dealing with the question of violence were inadequate in the new situation. Mennonite pacifism had not been tested for over a century and had become largely part of the economic, social, and cultural trappings of Mennonite life. Nonresistance was historically associated with its legality as a right and privilege, and was not a deep-rooted ethic. The commitment to peace was a structural rather

than an experiential one. The Mennonites, to a large extent had lost sight of the concept of the suffering church. Without it the peace position could not stand in the moment of crisis and tragedy.

In the United States the government has maintained a reasonably liberal policy for conscientious objectors, although not as liberal as that of Canada. During the American Revolution, something similar to modern conscription was practiced in the three colonies that the Mennonites lived in, but religious objectors could be exempted by paying fines or providing a substitute. A law to this effect was passed in Virginia in 1777. Public opinion, however, was not always as considerate and there were cases of mob violence against the Mennonites. Some Mennonites also felt uncomfortable with the substitution method and fine system and left for Canada as United Empire Loyalists.

During the civil war, initially, a similar system of hiring substitutes was available in both the North and the South. The law provided two methods of exemption from military service: (1) by furnishing an acceptable substitute, (2) by paying $300 ($500 in the South) for hiring such a substitute. Because of unhappiness with this among objectors, a new draft law was passed in 1864 in the North which gave three alternatives: (1) assignment to duty in hospitals for the care of sick and wounded soldiers, (2) assignment to duty in the care of the freedmen, (3) payment of a commutation fee of $300 for the care of sick and wounded soldiers. Although some Mennonites objected to some of these requirements, most found them satisfactory. A considerable number of young men also accepted military service.

In Upper Canada (Ontario), prior to 1855, Quakers, Mennonites, and Dunkers were exempt from military service on the condition of payment of a fine. The law enacted in 1855 exempted nonresistant people unconditionally. The first encounter with conscription in Canada came in 1917. The Mennonites of Manitoba had received a promise from the Canadian government in 1873 of complete exemption from all military service. In 1917 some confusion existed as to whether the conscription exemption applied only to the Prairie or also to the Ontario Mennonites. Although initially the government attempted to force some Ontario Mennonites into service, eventually all Mennonite church members were exempted. The Mennonites in Canada also took a definite stand against the purchase of war bonds, though they contributed liberally to the Red Cross.

The conditions in the United States were not as lenient for the conscientious objector in World War I. COs were legally exempt from military service but were subject to the draft and the young men were called to army camps. They were to be segregated and not required to wear the military uniform nor to engage in drill. They could choose from a list of noncombative services. Problems in definition of noncombative service and lengthy waits within the camp before the young men could appear before the Board of Inquiry, proved to be a hardship. There was frequent rough handling and abuse, often carried on by officers who had no sympathy for the law which respected the conscience of pacifists. Occasionally a CO was commanded to perform some act against his conscience and was court-martialed when he disobeyed. At home the Mennonite church was required to define its understanding of noncombative service and deal with the issue of war bonds. In some communities Mennonites were severely criticized and occasionally physically abused for their nonresistant stand.

World War I had impressed upon the peace churches the need for an aggressive peace education program. When the second war broke out, the Mennonite church was better prepared for it. In the United States, a Mennonite Central Peace Committee drafted a proposal before the beginning of the war and as a result the provision for conscientious objectors in the Selective Training and Service Act of 1940 was more generous and satisfactory than the law of 1917. Conscientious objectors were assigned to Civilian Public Service camps where men worked in soil conservation, dam building, and similar projects. In Canada similar camps were set up. Canadian camps were involved with forestry and fire fighting service. While in the United States the camps were operated by church agencies under the Selective Service, in the Canadian system the camps were operated by the government. In the United States, church groups were required to provide much of the maintenance and the men received no pay, while in Canada the entire cost was carried by the government and the workers received a small wage. In both the United States and Canada, the governments issued bonds for relief purposes, giving the nonresistant people an alternative to buying war bonds.

In the United States the military draft continued after the war. Many young men continued to do alternative service in hospitals and other self-supporting I-W programs. Work assignments overseas in the peace (PAX) and Teachers Abroad Program (TAP) of Mennonite Central Committee also became possibilities. The draft was discontinued after the American withdrawal from Viet Nam in 1973. Currently young men in the United States are required to register, but the draft has not yet been reinstated.

[1] G. F, Hershberger, *War, Peace, and Nonresistance* (Scottdale: Herald Press, 1969), p. 79.
[2] *Ibid.*, p. 71.
[3] J. B. Toews, "The Origin and Activity of the Mennonite *Selbstschutz* in the Ukraine (1915-1919)," *MQR* 46 January 1972, No.1, p. 5.
[4] *Ibid.*, p. 20

Resources for further study

Bender, H. S. "The Anabaptist Vision," *The Recovery of the Anabaptist Vision.* Edited by Guy Hershberger.

Hershberger, G. F. *War, Peace, and Nonresistance.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1953.
Horst, Samuel. *Mennonites in the Confederacy.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1967.
Klaassen, Walter. *Anabaptism: Neither Catholic nor Protestant.* Waterloo, Ont.: Conrad Press, 1973. Chapter 3.
Lehn, Cornelia. *Peace Be with You.* Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1981.
Reed, Ken. *Mennonite Soldier.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1974.
Regehr, Ernie. *Making a Killing.* Toronto: McClelland and Stewart Ltd., 1975.
Toews, J. B. *Lost Fatherland.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1967. Chapters 1 and 2.
_____ "The Origins and Activity of the Mennonite *Selbstschutz* in the Ukraine (1918-1919)," *Mennonite Quarterly Review,* Vol. 46, January 1972, No. 1, pp. 5-40.

Supplies

Student magazine for each student

E. Steps through the lesson

1. Introduce the lesson by noting that the Mennonite church is one of the few historic peace churches. What are the others? How do they cooperate?
2. Read "Following Jesus." Explore with your students the idea that the essence of Christianity is discipleship. Discuss the questions on page 59 in this context.
3. Consider pacifism from a historical perspective. Present some of the New Testament sayings on pacifism and indicate how the church has dealt with the pacifism theme.
4. Read through the comments on pacifism from the Anabaptist leaders, student magazine, pages 59, 60. Emphasize the point that the Anabaptists saw pacifism not as an addition to the gospel, but as the heart of the gospel.
5. Summarize the historical development of Mennonite CO status in Europe and Russia.
6. Review "During the Russian Revolution."
   a. Take note of the causes of the organization of the defense units.
   b. Discuss the question posed at the end of the reading.
7. Present the information given above on the state of Mennonite COs throughout United States and Canadian history.
8. Review the two accounts in "Conscientious objection in North America," student magazine, pages 61-63. Have the students discuss Ashliman's defense. How could it have been strengthened?
9. If any student has done a project on the story of a CO, have the student present that information.
10. Discuss the problem of modern day militarism. Present some information on Canadian and American involvement in militarism.

Alternative or Additional Acitivities

1. Debate one of the following:
   a. Nonresistance is an individual matter and each member of the church should be allowed to make his own decision without any action by the congregation.
   b. Be it resolved that Christians should not participate as soldiers in a war.
   c. Be it resolved that it is unethical to pay income taxes to be used for military purposes and Mennonites should refuse to pay that portion of their income tax but donate it to some charitable organization.
2. Reenact the All-Mennonite Conference in Lichtenau. Have students argue for:
   a. absolute pacifism and discipline of non-pacifist members
   b. absolute pacifism but individual decision with no congregation action either way
   c. limited defense against murder and rape
   d. all out involvement in the fight against the bandits and Red Army.
3. Reenact the General Conference Mid-triennium Conference on war taxes in Minneapolis. Debate Resolution 3 in the recorded minutes.
4. Have someone who was a CO in World War II or a later time speak to your class about his experience.
5. Discuss the statement that it is impossible not to be involved in some way when your nation is at war or in supporting the militarism of your society.
6. Have someone report on the novel by Rudy Wiebe, *Peace Shall Destroy Many.* Discuss the point that although the Mennonites are pacifists on the surface and talk a lot about it, underneath there is a great deal of conflict and violence in the Mennonite communities.
7. *That There Be Peace* is a recent pictorial album on the topic of COs in Canada during World War II, published by the Manitoba CO Reunion Committee. Get a copy and browse through it together. Copies may be ordered from the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0M4. ($6.00 paper, $9.00 hardbound)
8. See films listed on page 10.

The Many Faces of the Mennonite Church

A. Content outline

1. The Mennonite church today
   a. Influx of new Mennonites
   b. Black Mennonites
   c. Mennonites around the world
   d. North American Native Mennonites
2. The renewal of the Anabaptist vision

B. Overall purpose

The overall purpose of this lesson is to have students become aware of the shift within the Mennonite church from a membership made up of primarily one ethnic background to a membership of diverse racial and ethnic composition.

C. Specific objectives

1. to become acquainted with the newest faces within the Mennonite Church
2. to become aware that there has been a shift in membership throughout the world to non-white, non-European Mennonites
3. to introduce the renewal of the Anabaptist vision and the influence that the non-European Mennonites have had on this vision

D. Preparing for the lesson

The early Anabaptists were known for their mission activity. Their movement was characterized above all else by rapid numerical growth and spread to all parts of Europe. Anabaptism was very much a religious movement. It was only after several centuries that the descendants of the Anabaptists were molded into an ethnic people. The persecution and discrimination eventually succeeded in driving the movement underground and ending its mission outreach. Forced to be segregated from the rest of society in order to preserve their beliefs, Mennonites often came to understand themselves as being a separate *ethnic* people, rather than a separate *people of God*. The pioneer life in America and the seclusion in Russia only served to add to this ethnocentricity.

At the root of the formation of the General Conference Mennonite Church, however, was the concern both to shepherd the scattered ethnic congregations, and to engage in new mission endeavors. Early "Home Missions" meant, to the Mennonite leaders of the last century, caring for the scattered Mennonite settlers who were without pastoral care. In the 1880s, however, the attention of the General Conference was directed beyond the immediate church family. Two new areas of work were initiated at the conference sessions in 1893: care for orphans and city missions. The latter failed to materialize for twenty years, perhaps because the Mennonites were rural folk and unaccustomed to city ways. A trend toward breaking out of self-imposed isolation had begun.

Foreign missions was also one of the major factors in the formation and unification of the General Conference. Foreign missions treasuries were set up at the first sessions of the conference in 1860. Actual mission work began among the Arapahoe Indians in present Oklahoma in 1880. Overseas work began in India in 1900 and in China soon after. By 1920 foreign missions had come to be considered the highest Christian calling in the church's operation. Mennonite missions in certain countries have seen rapid growth in church membership. Large numbers of people from Asian and African background have been added to the Mennonite church.

Some major changes have taken place in

mission philosophy over the years. "The common idea originally of remaking mission-field 'underdeveloped' people into civilized Christians of Western type has given way to a thorough Christianization but in a native context. There is more appreciation of a non-Christian native ability and a less idealized view of Western civilization."[1] These new converts will make more and more of a contribution to the Mennonite church and will no doubt call many Mennonites to a reevaluation of their definition of the church.

The student magazine quotes Hubert Brown's comments on how many Mennonites have drifted away from being Anabaptists (page 66). Similar accusations are made by others who have accepted the Anabaptist interpretation of the gospel. Perhaps never before have Mennonites been as assimilated into a national society as they are in North America.

Before coming to North America all groups of Mennonites had lived a physically separated life from the rest of society. Often this was forced on them. The physical separation led to the development of a separate identity and culture, especially in Russia. Cultural, ethnic separation often became equated with spiritual separation. When the Mennonites from Russia came to North America they wished to continue a life of separation. This was especially true for those who emigrated to Manitoba in the 1870s. They were able to acquire large blocks of land, known as reserves, for exclusive Mennonite settlement. Language, dress, religion, and culture separated these Mennonites from their neighbors. Because of their unassuming separation, they became known to some as the "quiet in the land."

Physical separation could not last in the new world and has all but broken down. Mennonites are now more urban than rural. Distinctiveness in culture has largely been lost. Mennonites can be found in all walks of life making significant contributions to the larger North American society. With the loss of the physical separation has often come the loss of spiritual separation. Mennonites have become as materialistic as any other North Americans. They have accepted new fashions and trends as unthinkingly as their neighbors. They have often accepted the values of North American society, over against the values of the kingdom of God. Often the vision for which the Anabaptists died has been lost.

We need not, however, dwell on the negative. As Mennonites in the twentieth century we can experience the same Christ that the Anabaptists experienced. The invitation to make a radical commitment to Christ comes to all Christians. The future of the Anabaptist/Mennonite church depends on our response. Can we affirm and commit ourselves to the Anabaptist understanding of the call of Christ?

Hubert Brown, a black Mennonite, identifies five qualities of the Anabaptist's understanding of Christ which we would like to affirm. First, the Anabaptists understood Christ to be calling them to restore the church. "For the Anabaptists the church was to be a company of disciples who, having responded to Christ in a wide-awake voluntary manner, now formed His counter-community."[2] The Anabaptists broke with the prevailing norms and values which came between the church and God. The church, said the Anabaptists, could not be just an instrument to serve the interests of society.

Second, Anabaptists believed in the centrality of the Word of God and sought to experience God in a personal way. The Word of God was the supreme norm for them. Their experience of this Word brought about a radical change of life that affected their emotional and mental personhood. The Holy Spirit was part of their communities.

Third, the Christ of the Anabaptists called people to a serious community. They understood themselves to be a people of God. They were a community that was to live in contrast to the old society. Theirs was to be a true church community, not invisible but fully visible and obedient to God's will. Part of this serious community was the practice of mutual aid which they felt was a necessary part of being a community of Christ. Among the Anabaptist communities individualism was discouraged, while sharing with the brother in need was viewed with favor. There was to be caring not only for the brother and sister in the fellowship, but for those outside as well. The new community of Christ had a new set of values and a new set of economics. The need of others was one's responsibility.

Fourth, the Anabaptist understanding of Christ called them to affirm the dignity and worth of all human beings. All people were invited to be part of the believers' church. There was no room for a hierarchy or feelings of superiority. In the community of faith all were significant and equally important. This sense of social equality took the form, theologically, of an emphasis on the priesthood of all believers. Every believer had gifts and the responsibility to proclaim the gospel. Missionary work was not something for the elite, but for all believers.

Finally, the Anabaptist understanding of Christ led them to understand what suffering means, ". . . what it means to be hurt, to be in pain, to be tortured and brutalized, to be harassed and hounded."[3] Their theology was one that could work with suffering, tragedy, and death. They lived their lives in the face of these happenings.

Perhaps the greatest insight that the new faces in the Mennonite church have brought is that the Anabaptist vision is something to be cherished and valued, but it is also something that cannot be inherited like a "Mennonite" name. The Anabaptist faith will live on; the question for us Mennonites is whether we will be the ones to proclaim it.

[1]Samuel F. Pannabecker. *Open Doors: The History of the General Conference Mennonite Church* (Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1975), p. 343.

[2]Hubert Brown. *Black and Mennonite* (Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1976), p. 81.

[3]*Ibid.*, p. 89.

Resources for further study

Brown, Hubert L. *Black and Mennonite: A Search for Identity.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1976.

Juhnke, James. *A People of Mission.* Newton, Kans.: Faith and Life Press, 1979.

Kraybill, Paul N. *Mennonite World Conference Handbook.* Lombard, Ill.: Mennonite World Conference, 1978.

Schlabach, Theron. *Gospel Versus Gospel: Mission in the Mennonite Church.* Scottdale, Pa.: Herald Press, 1980.

Supplies

Student magazine for each student

A World Conference map of Mennonites from the Wichita Conference (teaching packet).

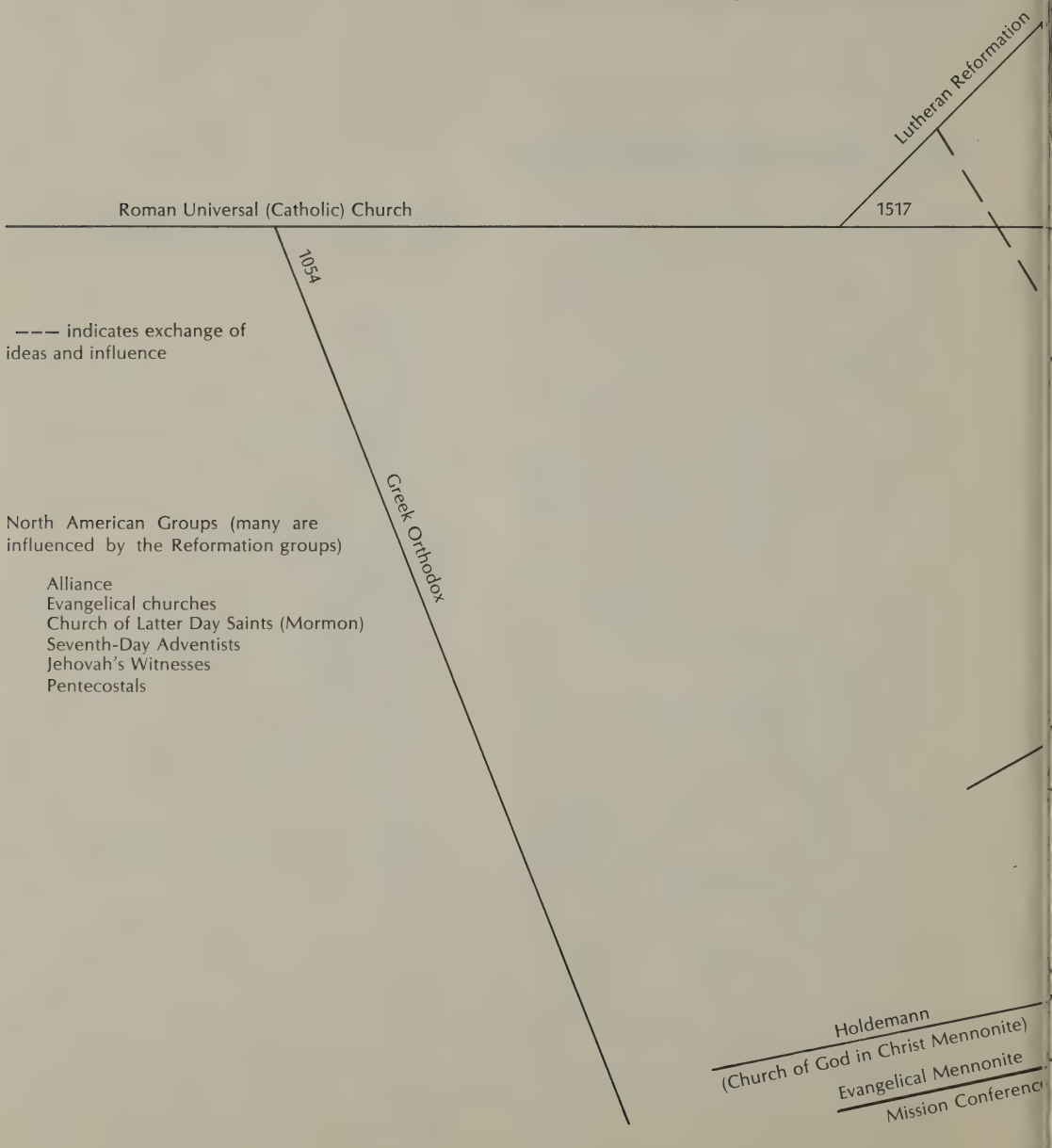
E. Steps through the lesson

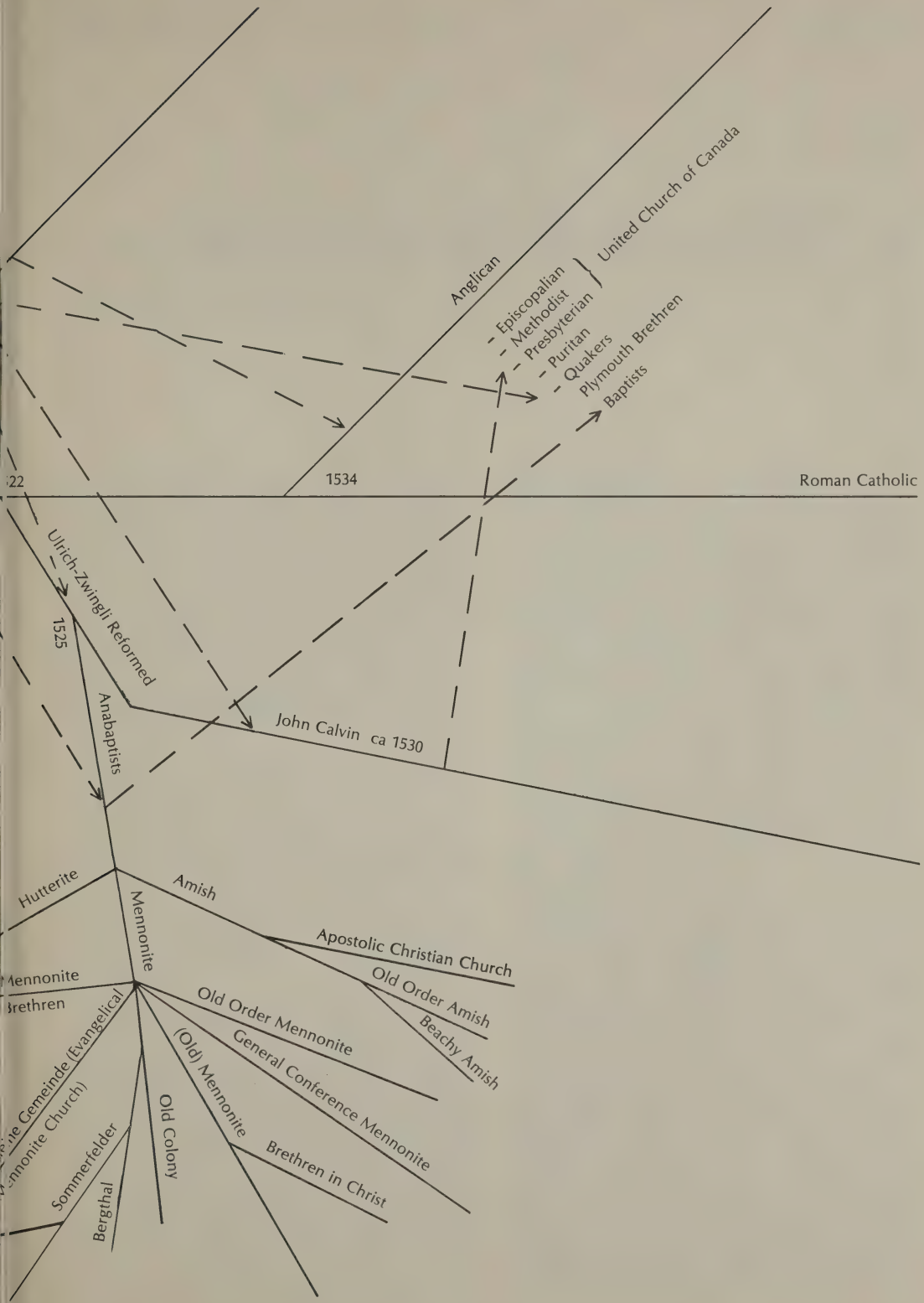
1. Introduce the lesson by reviewing some of the major themes and events that this course has dealt with. Indicate that the objective of this lesson is to consider some of the new faces and their contribution in the Mennonite church.
   a. Consider the question of what problems and concerns non-ethnic Mennonites experience in the Mennonite church.
   b. Make use of the resources you have within your congregation and class to deal with this question. Have a person who was not born into a Mennonite family share some of his/her experiences and perspectives.
   c. Have an older person from your congregation talk to your class about attitudes towards non-ethnic Mennonites during his or her youth.
2. Review "Black and Mennonite," student magazine, page 66.
   a. Discuss the suggestion that Mennonites should become familiar with black Mennonite history, just as black Mennonites must become familiar with white Mennonite history.
   b. If you have a Mennonite congregation from a racial group different from your own in the area, try to arrange a time together for discussion and fellowship.
3. Review "North American Native Mennonites," student magazine, pages 66, 67. Discuss the similarities that Lawrence Hart notes exist between Mennonites and Natives. What can Caucasian Mennonites learn from their Native brothers and sisters?
4. Review "Mennonites around the world."
   a. Using the World Conference map, take note of where Mennonites are throughout the world.
   b. Discuss the question posed at the end of the reading on Indonesia.
   c. Take note of how rapidly the church is growing in Africa. Speculate on the reasons and implications.
5. Review "Renewal of the Anabaptist vision," student magazine, pages 70, 71.
   a. Discuss the statement that Mennonites of today cannot call themselves heirs of the Anabaptists.
   b. Discuss some of the beliefs that the Mennonite church must hold to and emphasize in order to be called Anabaptists.

Alternative or Additional Activities

1. Debate the resolution: The Mennonite church has become so assimilated into North American society that it has lost its Anabaptist heritage.
2. View the film *Hazel's People.* Although the social mood of the film is dated, the point is still a good one to discuss.
3. View the film *Wichita '78* (11 minutes), *9th Mennonite World Conference* (35 minutes), or *Tenth Mennonite World Conference* (filmstrip and cassette).
4. Gather some up-to-date information on Mennonite missionary activity throughout the world. (See the *Mennonite World Conference Handbook,* p. 29, a summary chart.)
5. Have someone report on some of the present-day mission fields where strong churches now exist. Or if you are able to, invite a missionary to class to talk about the contributions of the church where he or she works. View the filmstrip *A City Without Walls.*
6. Have someone investigate further and report on the Cheyenne peace chiefs mentioned by Lawrence Hart.

The Reformation Family Tree




Anglican
Episcopalian
Methodist
Presbyterian
United Church of Canada
Puritan
Quakers
Plymouth Brethren
Baptists
22
1534
Roman Catholic
Ulrich-Zwingli Reformed
1525
Anabaptists
John Calvin ca 1530
Hutterite
Amish
Mennonite
Apostolic Christian Church
Old Order Amish
Beachy Amish
Old Order Mennonite
General Conference Mennonite
(Old) Mennonite
Brethren in Christ
Old Colony
Sommerfelder
Bergthal
Mennonite
Brethren
Gemeinde (Evangelical
Mennonite Church)

Michael Sattler's Defense

(From Martyrs' Mirror)

60 Thereupon Michael Sattler requested permission to confer with his brethren and sisters, which was granted him. Having conferred with them for a little while, he began and undauntingly answered thus: "In regard to the articles relating to me and my brethren and sisters, hear this brief answer:

"First, That we have acted contrary to the imperial mandate, we do not admit; for the same says that the Lutheran doctrine and delusion is not to be adhered to, but only the Gospel and Word of God. This we have kept; for I am not aware that we have acted contrary to the Gospel and the Word of God; I appeal to the words of Christ.

"Secondly, That the real body of Christ the Lord is not present in the sacrament, we admit; for the Scripture says: Christ ascended into heaven and sitteth on the right hand of His heavenly Father whence He shall come to judge the quick and the dead; from which it follows, that if He is in heaven, and not in the bread, He may not be eaten bodily. Mark 16:19; Acts 1:9; Col. 3:1; Acts 10:42; II Tim. 4:1.

"Thirdly, As to baptism we say: Infant baptism is of no avail to salvation; for it is written, that we live by faith alone. Again: He that believeth and is baptized shall be saved. Peter likewise says: The like figure whereunto even baptism doth also now save us (not the putting away of the filth of the flesh, but the answer of a good conscience toward God), by the resurrection of Jesus Christ. Romans 1:7; Mark 16:16; I Pet. 3:21.

"Fourthly, We have not rejected the oil; for it is a creature of God, and what God has made is good and not to be refused; but that the pope, the bishops, monks and priests can make it better, we do not believe; for the pope never made anything good. That of which the epistle of James speaks is not the pope's oil. Gen. 1:11; I Tim. 4:4; James 5:14.

"Fifthly, We have not condemned the mother of God and the saints; for the mother of Christ is to be blessed among all women; for to her was accorded the favor of giving birth to the Saviour of the whole world. But that she is a mediatress and advocatess, of this the Scriptures know nothing; for she must with us await the judgment. Paul said to Timothy: Christ is our Mediator and Advocate with God. As regards the saints; we say that we who live and believe are the saints; which I prove by the epistles of Paul to the Romans, Corinthians, Ephesians; and in other places where he always writes: To the beloved saints. Hence we that believe are the saints; but those who have died in faith we regard as the blessed. Luke 1:28; Matthew 1:21; I Tim. 2:5; I Cor. 1:2; Eph. 1:1; Rev. 14:15.

"Sixthly, We hold, that we are not to swear before the authorities: For the Lord says: Swear not; but let your communication be, Yea, yea; Nay, nay. Matt. 5:34; James 5:12.

"Seventhly, When God called me to testify of His Word, and I had read Paul, and also considered the unchristian and perilous state in which I was; beholding the pomp, pride, usury, and great whoredom of the monks and priests, I went and took unto me a wife, according to the command of God; for Paul well prophesies concerning this to Timothy: In the latter time it shall come to pass that men shall forbid to marry, and command to abstain from meats which God hath created to be received with thanksgiving. I Cor. 7:2; I Tim. 4:3.

"Eighthly, If the Turks should come, we ought not to resist them; for it is written: Thou shalt not kill. We must not defend ourselves against the Turks and others of our persecutors, but are to beseech God with earnest prayer to repel and resist them. But that I said, that if warring were right, I would rather take the field against the so-called Christians, who persecute, apprehend and kill pious Christians, than against the Turks, was for this reason: The Turk is a true Turk, knows nothing of the Christian faith; and is a Turk after the flesh; but you, who would be Christians, and who make your boast of Christ, persecute the pious witnesses of Christ, and are Turks after the spirit. Ex. 20:13; Matt. 7:7; Tit. 1:16.

Audio-Visual Resources

The Amish: A People of Preservation. 28-minute, color motion picture, 1975. Produced by John Ruth and Heritage Films with the collaboration of John A. Hostetler and distributed by Encyclopedia Britannica Educational Corporation.

An excellent, sympathetic portrayal of the beliefs and practices of the Amish. The film points out that the Amish are not necessarily opposed to technology but refuse to allow it to dominate their lives. The importance of the church and obedience to their church rules are stressed. It is pointed out, though, that while rules are to be obeyed, there is room for fun and enjoyment within those rules. Suitable for all ages, especially family groups. (HMP, MBMC, PP)

And When Their Time Had Come. 45 minutes, black and white film.

The story of the Russian Mennonites and the struggles they went through after the collapse of their way of life in the wake of the revolution in 1917. Includes emigration to Western Canada. (RC)

Beyond This Land. 42 minutes, color film.

A 1972 documentary on the Amish Mennonite Sesquicentennial in Wilmont Township, Ontario. (MBCM, RC)

A City Without Walls. 10 minutes, 63-frame, color filmstrip, 1969.

This filmstrip grew from the conviction that the Mennonite church must respond more positively to urban and minority concerns that have surfaced forcefully in the United States and Canada. It pushes us to examine our heritage—with understanding—and encourages the process of confession. Then it stimulates us to consider practical expressions—to get on with the task at hand. (AVL, MBCM, MCC)

The Coming of the Mennonites to North America. 20 minutes, color, 16 mm.

The major Mennonite migrations from 1683 (Switzerland to Pennsylvania) to the post World War II period. (RC) [for purchase from Faith and Life Press, Box 347, Newton, KS 67114.]

Conscience and War Taxes. Color slide set, 1978.

A work tracing the history of the United States income tax and the economic consequences of military spending. It discusses a legal alternative which could provide more than two billion dollars a year for finding peaceful solutions to violence and war. It presents clearly and factually the moral, legal, and economic dilemma of an estimated eight million Americans who are conscientiously opposed to having close to one-third of their federal tax payments spent for military purposes and preparations for war. (AVL, MCC)

Faith of Our Fathers. Slide set: complete version—240 slides; short version—160 slides.

From the beginning of Anabaptism to the migration to the new world. (RC)

Hazel's People. 16 mm. Color. (PP)

Hutterite Life. 58 minutes, color, 16 mm.

An introduction to the life of Hutterites filmed in fifteen colonies in six states and provinces. Produced by John Ruth. For rental or purchase information write Buller Films, Inc., Henderson, NE 68371. (Available spring, 1981)

Heritage Series Slide Sets

The Life of Conrad Grebel. 5 slides.
The Life of Felix Manz. 5 slides.
The Life of Georg Blaurock. 5 slides.
The Life of Menno Simons. 5 slides.
(RC, AVL [for purchase, $2.00 a set])

A Man of Peace. 16 mm color.

Ted Studebaker, a conscientious objector, chose to go to Vietnam as a farmer. While working with the mountain people to improve farm methods he was killed in a Vietcong attack. His work demonstrates an alternative to violence. (MCC)

Mennonite Contributions to Canadian Society. 15-minute filmstrip.

The following topics are covered: segregation, integration and cultural adaption, discrimination, persecution, migration, and assimilation. (RC, AVL)

Mennonite Migrations to Ontario. 15-minute filmstrip.

The following topics are covered: segregation, integration and cultural adaption, discrimination, persecution, migration, and assimilation. (RC, AVL)

Mennonite Migrations to Western Canada. 15-minute filmstrip.

The following topics are covered: segregation, integration and cultural adaption, discrimination, persecution, migration, and assimilation. (RC, AVL)

Mennonite Way of Life. 15-minute filmstrip.

The following topics are covered: segregation, integration and cultural adaption, discrimination, persecution, migration, and assimilation. (RC, AVL)

The Mennonite Story. 22-minute color motion picture, 1970. Produced by Burt Martin Associates.

A documentary film of life and worship among the Mennonites and Amish in Lancaster County, Pennsylvania. *The Mennonite Story* was prepared to help answer questions tourists ask. A few flashbacks present Anabaptist origins, and a broad spectrum of persons tell what faith means in their vocations. (MBMC)

Mennonites: The Peaceful Revolution. 28-minute black and white motion picture, 1967. Produced by CBS-TV.

This is CBS television's appraisal of Mennonites today and how we got this way. It speaks of a redefining of terms, of changing expressions, and of shaping of a new image of Mennonites. (AVL, MBCM)

Menno's Reins. 50 minutes, color, 16 mm, 1976.

This film traces the development of the 450-year history of the Mennonite people. It highlights the movement of Mennonites to Canada. The cast is composed largely of Mennonite people who gave their time voluntarily. The narrator is John Friesen, a native of Winkler, Manitoba. (RC, HMP, MCC)

New Call to Peacemaking. 15 minutes, color, slide set, 1978.

War and violence are denials of the life and teaching of Jesus Christ. The call to peace is central to the Christian gospel. These were the concerns that brought together delegates from the three historic peace churches for a gathering in Green Lake, Wisconsin. This slide set recaps that event, documenting its purpose and importance. (AVL, MCC)

Ninth Mennonite World Conference. 35-minute color motion picture.

Scenes from the 9th World Conference held in Curitiba, Brazil. Includes comments on life in Brazil and on some of the conference issues, interviews with delegates and guests, and a profile of the MC. (MBCM, RC)

Prairie Pioneers. 35-minute, color.

This film depicts the coming and early settlement of Mennonites in Western Canada. Set in the context of the 1974 Centennial Celebrations, it includes some of those activities. Available only from the Mennonite Heritage Centre, 600 Shaftesbury Blvd., Winnipeg, Manitoba R3P 0M4. Rental: $15.00 plus mailing cost.

The Quiet in the Land. 72-minute color motion picture, 1971. Produced by John Ruth for Christopher Dock Mennonite High School.

A twentieth-century Mennonite interrogates his past, reflecting on spiritual and cultural directions. The Mennonites of Skippack in the time of Christopher Dock help him evaluate the issues of war, education, materialism, and the need to pass the faith of our fathers on to the next generation. (AVL, MBCM)

Secret Meeting Places. Heritage Series Slide Set, 5 slides. (RCL, AVL)

Tenth Mennonite World Conference. Filmstrip and cassette, 1978.

A filmstrip and cassette depicting the happenings at the World Conference in Wichita, Kansas, in July 1978. (RC)

Wichita '78. 11 minutes, color film.

On the Tenth Mennonite World Conference held in Wichita, Kansas. (RC, MBCM, PP)

Abbreviations

AVL - Audio Visual Library
Box 347
Newton, KS 67114
(316) 283-5100

HMP - Heritage Media Productions
4824 E. Butler Ave.
Fresno, CA 93718
(209) 251-8681

MBCM - MBCM Audiovisuals
Box 1245
Elkhart, IN 46515
(219) 294-7523

MCC - Mennonite Central Committee
21 South 12 Street
Akron, PA 17501
(717) 859-1151

PP - People's Place
Intercourse, PA 17534
(717) 768-7171

RC - Resource Centre
Conference of Mennonites in Canada
600 Shaftesbury Blvd.
Winnipeg, Man. R3P 0M4
(204) 888-6781